A CATECHISM OF PENANCE, Guiding SINNERS Unto a True CONVERSION.

Translated out of French,

By *W. B.*

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UMI

THE PREFACE Of The Author.

SUch is the necessity of the Vertue of Penance, that the Salvation of a Sinner is as wholly, without it, Impossible, as the Loss of his Soul is Inevitable. From whence we cannot but gather, how dangerous, yea, how

how pernicious that Errour is, the false Maxims of which Adulterate this Vertue, bereaving Sinners of the last and best Means they have, to shake off the Bonds of Sin, to escape Damnation, to recover the lost Grace, and Favour of Almighty God; and, finally, to secure the eternal and main Concern of their own Souls.

Is it not then a thing truly deplorable, to behold so many Christians, abusing, in so important a Point, them-

themſelves? What greater Blindneſs, than, not knowing, or not having a Will to know, what that Interiour Diſpoſition of the Soul ought to be, whereon the Vertue of true Penance chiefly depends, to preſume to Judge of the Converſion of a Sinner, rather by the fair words he too often gives; or ſome other ſenſible motion he perhaps feels, than by any change, which appears in his Converſation, or amendment in his Life.

Not are they wanting,

who think Penance, and true Sorrow for Sin, to be but the bare effect of some natural advantage a Soul meets, by birth, withal; and which depends not but on the Will alone. Now these Men mistake each little Resentment, we are wont to experience, each Act of dislike, which the meer prospect of a disordered Life, or other human Considerations, are apt to excite, for an undoubted mark of true Penance; that is to say, for a true and real Conversion of the Heart. From

From which ſo Erronious an Opinion, it queſtionleſs, proceeds, that notwithſtanding ſo frequent a reſort to the Tribunal of Penance, ſo ſmall fruit of Reformation appears, ſo few merit the Grace of the Remiſſion of their Sins; never were more Confeſſions ſeen, and never the number of true Converts leſs; which is to ſay, never were falſe, and counterfeit Penitents more numerous; never real and true more rare. For what imports the word *Penance*, but *Converſi-*

on; and where no Change, no Converſion of the Heart is wrought, Penance cannot be, but abuſively ſo called.

This ſo frequent uſe of the Sacrament of Penance, doth not only not render the greateſt part of Chriſtians better; but, by a juſt Judgment of God, and the abuſe they make thereof, cauſeth them, inſtead of mollifying the Heart, to become more obdurat in their Crimes, and conſequently to draw down in lue of Benedictions, the

Wrath

Wrath of Heaven on their own Heads.

Nay, how many approach not unto the Sacraments, but on design the better to nourish their Impieties; thinking to hide so foul a visage under so fair a mask of seeming Vertue. The usual Dress indeed, under which Hypocrites disguising themselves, seek to appear in the Eye of others, better than indeed they are. Such is the Malice, such the Impiety of so many pretenders at least to Christianity, that they sur-

pass

paſs therein the Infidels themſelves, whom God hath not called to the Knowledg of himſelf.

So decay'd at preſent is the Spirit of Chriſtianity become, that but from time to time to confeſs and communicate, is to have made a fair advance in the way of a Spiritual Life; though ſcarce doth a Month only paſs; yea, too often a far leſs time, without a relapſe into mortal Sin. To frequent with diligence the Sacraments, be our Failings what they will,

is to lead, in the Language of the World, a devout Life; little reflecting that those pretended Acts of Piety, how goodly soever in appearance, are yet, when unaccompanied with true Contrition, when without a real Conversion of the Heart, but so many Acts indeed of Sacriledge, rendring the Soul more culpable in the Eye of Heaven, than before.

They Imagin that the sole Use of the Sacraments cannot but argue a great stock of Vertue, but heed not

not the want of due disposi-tions requisite thereunto: perswading themselves, they may be laudably received, though with an Heart wholly intent to the heaping up of Riches, wholly swayed by Vanity, by Ambition; wholly thirsting after Pleasures, after Divertisements; wholly charmed by other sensual Allurements: As if the opposite Maxims of the World and Gospel could be reconcil'd; or Grace of *Jesus Christ* be drawn with the pravity of our Wills to an accord.

I have then, to the end to apply a Remedy to ſo growing a Miſchief, and diſſipate, if poſſible, thoſe falſe Lights, which are indeed but Darkneſs, compoſed this ſmall Treatiſe, wherein I have endeavoured to Inform, with Grace its aſſiſtance, even the meaneſt Capacities, what Interiour Diſpoſitions are required unto true Penance; as alſo the eſteem we ought to have of ſo ſingular a Benefit, tranſcending all Deſerts of ours, and only to be purchaſed through the pure

Mer-

Mercies of God, and Merits of his only Son *Jesus Christ*. The means also we are to make use of, in order to the obtaining thereof, are here expressed; as also the Method to be observed in the Examin of our selves, to the end to avoid the danger of being deceived in so weighty a concern, which the want of Knowledge to discern between false and true Contrition, cannot but cast us Irrevocably into:

I heartily beseech the Goodness of God to grant

a Bleſſing to this little Work, and water with the abundant Dew of his Grace the Hearts of Sinners, that being Converted, they may bring forth Fruits worthy of Penance.

There are alſo annexed to the Inſtructions relating unto Penance (which are digeſted in a Catechiſtical Form, by way of Dialogue) certain devout Exerciſes and Meditations, ſuch as I judg'd moſt proper to beget, and nouriſh in us a ſence of true Contrition: the two Firſt

are

are taken from St. *Anſelme*, to wit, the ſecond and third of thoſe of that holy Father, according to the rank aſſign'd them in the laſt Edition of his Works. The others are with more Method compos'd, according to thoſe Rules preſcrib'd for Meditation, which ſeem to be the moſt natural, and freeſt from conſtraint.

THE

The APPROBATIONS of this CATECHISM in the FRENCH Tongue, Given by Doctors of the THEOLOGICAL Faculty of PARIS;

Faithfully Translated.

I. Approbation.

I *Under-written Doctor and Professour in Divinity of the House and Society of* Sorbonne, *do by these Certify, That I have read a little Book, Written in* French, *bearing the Title of,* A Catechism of Penance, guiding Sinners to a true Conversion. *Given at* Sorbonne *the 5th. day of* December. 1675. *PIROT.*

II. Ap-

II. Approbation.

I *Have perus'd a small Work Entituled,* A Catechisme of Penance, &c. *Whereunto are annex'd divers Meditations of a Penitent Soul. It contains nothing but the Doctrine which the Church hath in all Ages professed: And if Sinners shall but follow the Way which is here taught, they will infallibly enter the Port of Eternal Felicity, having first obtain'd of God, by the Ministy of the Priest, the Remission of their sins. 'Tis the Testimony which I ow unto the Publick, and whereunto I have Subscribed. At* Paris *the* 9th. *day of* December, 1675. T. Roulland.

III. Approbation.

THE Practiſe of all Vertues was ordinary amongſt the Primitive Chriſtians, becauſe they neglected not the exerciſe of Penance. Which the Chriſtians of theſe times neglecting, they are become ſtrangers to the Practice of all Vertues. 'Tis then to be wiſhed, that they would reſume the Spirit of the Primitive Church, ſo to renew in themſelves the ſpirit of Penance, a work of little difficulty, if they but faithfully practice the Rules which are preſcrib'd in a book, the title of which is, A Catechiſm of Penance, *&c. wherein I have found nothing which is not conformable to the Doctrine of the Church. Given at* Paris *the 16th day of December:* 1675. Blampignon, Curate *of St.* Merry.

IV. Ap-

IV. Approbation.

A Difficult and Unfrequented way requires a faithfull, and experienced guide: Such is the way of Penance, which Necessity engageth a sinner in, aspiring to the Grace of justification, such a guide then stands he in Need of; unto whose conduct he may with safety commit himself; and such an one will this little Treatise, entituled, A Catechism of Penance, *&c. furnish him with: Seeing that but practising the Rules and Maxims it delivers, he shall but practise the Rules and Maxims of the Holy Scripture, of the Councils, and Fathers of the Church, which he shall find all speaking with the same Tongue, and redu-*

reduced to an Abridgment in form of Catechiſm; to the end, that Sinners (whoſe Blindneſs, as to the Verities of Chriſtian Morality, exceeds the Ignorance of Children in the Myſteries of Faith) may learn theſe Rules and Maxims of true Penance *with leſs pain, and more facility. For then from having obſerved therein the leaſt thing contrary to Faith or good Manners; We certify, that all it contains, conſpires to nouriſh in the Juſt, and in Sinners to excite this* Spirit of Penance, *ſo neceſſary for a Chriſtian; but which loſeth proportionably amidſt the world its force, and decays, as the Perverſity of Men gathers ſtrength, and encreaſes.* Given at *Paris* the 3*d.* day of *December.* 1675.

G. Groin. Boſcager.

Errours escaped in the Press.

Page 32. Line ult. for *sequence*, Read *consequence*. p. 34. l. 23. f. *enenemy* r. *Enemy*. p. 172. l. 14. f. *ruduced* r. *reduced*. p. 192. l. 8. f. *devouer* r. *devourer*. p. 195. l. 24. f. *the* r. *thee*. p. 200. l. 1. f. *and* r. *an*.

A

CATECHISM OF PENANCE.

Guiding SINNERS into the Way of a True CONVERSION.

I. Instruction.

SHEWING,

Wherein the Virtue of True PENANCE Consists.

Queſt. *WHat doth this word Penance properly ſignify?*

Anſwer. It ſignifies a Sorrow, and Diſſatisfaction for having Lov-

ed, desir'd, said, or done any Thing contrary to the Law of God.

Q. *Doth this Sorrow always flow from the Vertue of True and Christian Penance?*

A. No; for, as the *Roman* (a) *Catechisme* well observes, it often proceeds, not from the Consideration of the Offence committed against Almighty God, but from the regard we have to our own Interest; And it is then purely an Effect of Nature, and not of any Christian, and true Penance. But when we bewail our own Offences past, out of the only Motive, That a God so infinitely Holy, so infinitely Good, hath been thereby Offended, and heartily detest them on this account alone, we have ground to believe, That our Hearts are truly touch'd, and that our Sighs, and Tears, are the real Effects thereof.

Q. *What is then the Vertue of Penance?*

(a) *Cat. Rom.* §. 7.

A. It

A. It is the Guift, and peculiar Grace of God, by means whereof, the Sinner converts himself heartily unto him, hateing and detesting the Offences of his Life past, with a strong Resolution, through Divine Grace its assistance, to Sin no more; firmly hopeing withal, to find Pardon, through the great Mercies of God, and Merits of his only Son Jesus Christ.

Q. Why call you Penance the Guift of God?

A. Because if God Almighty enlightens not from above the Understanding, and enflames not with his Divine Love the Heart, we shall never become Converted, but shall Dye undoubtedly in our Sins.

Q. Why call we Penance a peculiar Grace?

A. Because God Almighty grants it not, but when, and to whom it pleaseth Him. As also because the Conversion of a Sinner is a greater

Miracle than the raiſeing of the dead.

Q. *How ſo?*

A. Although a dead Perſon, raiſed by the Power of God to Life, could not Raiſe himſelf, yet is he not unworthy of the New Life he receives; but a Sinner fallen from the Life of Grace, hath juſtly Merited to be for ever deprived thereof.

Q. *Doth not the Vertue of Penance comprehend in it ſelf all other Vertues?*

A. It contains, in the Opinion of Saint *Thomas*, (b) in ſome ſort, that which appertains to all other Vertues: For Penance being a kind of Reparation of Honour made by Man to God, it neceſſarily includes thoſe Vertues, which have God for their Object; which are called Theological: And therefore cannot *Chriſtian Penance* be without

(b) 3 P. q. 85. a. 3. ad 4.

Faith,

Faith, which begetteth in us a Belief in the Paſſion of the Son of God; through the Merits of which, our Sins paſt are Pardoned, and we re-admitted into Favour: Nor can it be without a firm Hope and Confidence, that bewailing, and deteſting, as we ought, our Sins, we ſhall obtain the Remiſſion of them: Nor can Penance, in fine, be truly ſo called, unleſs it be accompanied with a true Hatred of Sin for God Almighty's ſake, who hath been thereby Offended; which Averſion appertains to Charity.

Q. *If Penance comprehends Faith, Hope, and Charity, How can it be ſaid to be a particular Virtue?*

A. The ſame Saint *Thomas* (c) Anſwers, That if we look on Penance purely as a Sorrow for ſin paſt, It ought not then to be taken for a particular Vertue; becauſe this Sorrow may flow from Cha-

(c) *Loc. cit.* in *corp.*

rity alone. But considering it as a Sorrow for our Offences against God, in, and together with the Design we have by due Satisfaction, and the Amendment of our Lives, to Repair the same, It then manifestly appears, That Penance ought to be look'd on as a particular Vertue, and Branch of Justice. For to repair a Wrong done, Sorrow alone sufficeth not, nor a bare purpose only to Offend no more, but unto a perfect Reconciliation with the Party injured, satisfaction is no less required, which is an Act as well of Justice, as of Love.

Q. *What are the Effects of true Penance?*

A. 1*st*. It cleanseth the *Soul* from the stain of *sin*. 2*ly*. Satisfaction is thereby, in some sort, made to the Divine Justice offended, by Repairing the Injury done unto God by sin. 3*ly*. It reconcileth *Sinners* unto God, restoring them again to his Love, and Favor.

II. *In-*

II. Inſtruction.

Of the Neceſſity of Penance.

Queſt. *Doth God never Pardon ſin without this interiour Penance, called by St.* Auguſtin, *the Converſion of the Heart?*

Anſw. God Almighty, by the means of the *Sacrament of Baptiſm*, Remits, as to Infants, Original *Sin*, and that *Independently* of *Penance*, being wholly thereof, in regard of their Age, as *St. Auguſtin* Teacheth (d) incapable: But Mortal Sin, after Years of diſcretion, he never Pardons, where true Penance, that is to ſay, the Converſion of the Heart, is wanting. The ſame Holy Father aſſuring us, That God Almighty, who ſtill Pardons the Sins of thoſe, who truly Con-

(d) *De Cap. com. don.* l. 4. c. 24.

vert themſelves unto Him; Excludes from all hopes of like Pardon, thoſe, who become not in like manner Converted, *Qui converſis peccata donat, non converſis non donat.* Nor is the remiſſion of Mortal ſin, in the Opinion of *St. Thomas*, (e) leſs than Impoſſible, where the Virtue of true Penance prepareth not the way.

Q. *Upon what Ground doth this Doctrine rely?*

A. On the Word of *JESUS CHRIST*, Verity it ſelf; who expreſly announceth unto Sinners, that *Unleſs they do Penance, they ſhall all Periſh*; (f) which he twice in the ſame Diſcourſe repeats, to the end to oblige them to lend an attentive Ear to ſo terrible a Threat, and ſeriouſly to Liſten to ſo important a Truth, to wit, That hopes of Salvation for Sinners, without Penance, are in vain: Nor is it leſs

(e) Pſal. 6. (f) Luc. 13.

Remark-

Remarkable, that Penance was chiefly That which Chriſt's Great Precurſor, as alſo Chriſt himſelf, and his Apoſtles ſought, by the firſt of all their Sermons, to excite their Followers unto. So undoubtedly did they believe *Penance* to be the main Point, on which depended the Salvation of Mankind; and that no Part was, without it, to be pretended unto, in the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, or Admittance to be purchas'd into the Inheritance of his Father's Glory.

The firſt Thing St. *John* Announc'd, was, *Do Penance, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.* (g) *Yield Fruits worthy of Penance. I Baptize ye in Water unto Penance.* The like alſo did Chriſt himſelf, uſeing, when He firſt Preach'd, theſe Words, (h) *Do Penance, for the Kingdom of God draws nigh.* And what elſe was St. *Peter*'s firſt Ser-

(g) *Mat.* 3. 1, 2, 8, 11. (h) *Mat.* 4. v. 17.

mon, but an Exhortation unto Penance: *Do penance*, ſaid he, (i) ſpeaking unto thoſe, who had addreſs'd themſelves unto him, in order to their being Inform'd, what they ought to do.

By which it plainly appears, That the Goſpel of Grace is no other, properly ſpeaking, than the *Goſpel of penance*: Which made St. *Paul* to ſay, *That now it is, that God appoints the doing of* Penance *to be proclaim'd unto the World, without exception, either of perſon or place.* Act. 17. ver. 30.

Q. *Did Jeſus Chriſt then come into the World, to the end, to oblige us unto Penance?*

A. Can you doubt thereof? Himſelf having expreſly declared, (k) That the End of his coming, was to call, not the Juſt, but Sinners unto Penance. And was not the firſt thing He told His Apoſtles, after

(i) Act. 2. *ver.* 38. (k) Luke 5. *ver.* 31.

He

He had opened their Understandings, and Inspired them with the Knowledge of the Scriptures, That it was necessary that Christ should Suffer, (l) and Rise again the Third day from the Dead; and that they should Preach *Penance*, and the Remission of Sins unto all Nations in his Name. And in fine, doth not St. *Peter*, speaking of Jesus Christ, say, (m) That it is He, whom God hath, by his Power, as the Prince and Saviour, Exalted; to the end, to Grant unto *Israel* the *Grace of Penance*, and of the Remission of their Sins. (n) It is then manifest, That the Grace and Gift of *Penance*, are the proper Effect, and undoubted Fruit of the Death and Passion of the *Son* of *God*, and that without this Grace, we cannot hope for the Remission of our Sins.

Q. *When a Sinner is truly penitent, doth he undoubtedly obtain the*

(l) Luk. 24. v. 46, 47. (m) Act. 3. (n) Act. 3.

Re-

Remiſſion of his Sins, how Enormous or great ſoever they be?

A. Yes, ſeeing that God, who cannot lye, hath by Promiſe obliged himſelf thereunto. *If the ſinner,* (o) ſaith he, *ſhall Convert himſelf, and do Penance for his ſins; If he ſhall keep my Commandements, and obſerve the Rules of Juſtice, I will forget his Iniquities, and he ſhall Live for ever.* God having excluded from his Mercies, the ſins of none, but thoſe who Dye impenitent therein.

Q. *Can you by any Reaſon Convince me of the Verity of this Promiſe?*

A. You are already Convinced, that no Sinner can Convert himſelf unto God, unleſs God firſt Convert him; and that God Converts him not, but by the means of a Powerful preventing Grace: You cannot then but know, that God Almighty, Converting a Sinner, is

(o) Ezech. 18.

already

already become, in reſpect of the ſaid Sinner, Converted; and Converting him not, but by Reſtoring him unto Grace; 'tis not to be thought He will deny to a Sinner the Grace of Pardon, whom himſelf renders truly Penitent.

III. Inſtruction.

Of the Degrees of Penance.

Queſt. *UNto what cauſe is the beginning of Penance to be Aſcrib'd?*

Anſw. To the Grace of God. The Council of *Trent* declaring, that being arriv'd unto the Age of diſcretion, our Juſtification ought, as to its beginning, to be aſcribed to the preventing Grace of God through *Jeſus Chriſt. We diſpoſe our ſelves*, ſaith the Council, *unto Juſtification, when being*

ing excited, and aided by the Divine Grace, &c. which the Roman *Catechiſm* thus explains. *The Mercy of God prevents a ſinner, it changeth the heart, and inclineth it unto himſelf, which made the Prophet* Hieremy *to ſay, Convert us Lord unto thy ſelf, and we will Convert our ſelves unto thee.*

Q. *What is the firſt ſtep or diſpoſition towards Penance?*

A. Faith. *Arriving unto Faith by the means of hearing* (continues the ſaid Council) *they are by an Act of the Will, left in its full liberty, drawn unto God, believing as moſt undoubtedly true, whatſoever he hath revealed, and promiſed: And chiefly, that the Wicked are Juſtified by the Grace and Mercy of God, through the Redemption, which is in Jeſus Chriſt.*

The ſame doth the Roman Catechiſme teach, in theſe terms, *Being illuſtrated by this light, they interiourly approach unto God by Faith,*

Faith; for to approach unto God, it is in the first place, as the Apostle saith, (a) *necessarily required.* That we believe there is a God, and that he rewardeth those who seek him.

Q. *Why is faith, and chiefly the belief of these Verities, so absolutely required to the justification of a sinner?*

A. Because he, who hath not this Belief, nor this knowledg, can neither Love God, nor fear him, nor place his hope in him, as he ought; nor can he hate, and detest sin with that hearty sorrow, which Christian Penance requireth: The reason is manifest, for where the knowledg of the Majesty, and greatness of God is wanting, the malice of sin cannot be known, it not being in our Power to love, or hate what we know not: for which reason also it is, that he who hath no knowledg of the

(a) Heb. 11. 6.

Grace

Grace and Mercy of God, nor of our Redemption through Jesus Christ, cannot hope to share in the Mercyes of God, nor place a confidence in the Merits of Jesus Christ; which yet, as the Council of *Trent* declares, is no less than absolutely necessary to the work of our Justification, and without which, we can neither be truly Penitent, nor merit the remission of our sins.

Q. *What is the second step, or disposition unto Penance?*

A. The fear of pain. (a) *Knowing themselves*, saith the same Council, *to be Sinners, they dread the severity of God's Judgments, and reap no small fruit thereby*, &c. *for representing to themselves the rigour of Pains for an Eternity*, (b) *Fear seizeth their hearts, and diverts them from falling into sin.*

Q. *Why are we ordinarily led un-*

(a) Con. trid. *Sef.* 6. c. 6, (b) Catech. Rom.

to

to true Penance, by the Apprehenſion, and fear of Pain?

A. As the heart purſues nothing with more eagerneſs than pleaſure, nor flies any thing more than grief, and pain; fear, which ſecures it againſt Pleaſure, the Allurement unto ſin, conduceth not a little to the Bridling our proneſs thereunto, as alſo to the reclaiming us from Evil, by the conſideration of the pain which attends the ſame. Whence it is, that fear weaning us from Evil, to the end to eſcape the pain awaiting thereon, it diſpoſeth us, by a more Generous, more Heroick, and more Chriſtian Sentiment to the Love of Good, and conſequently to the deteſtation and flight of Evil.

Q. *Why is not the fear alone of Pain ſufficient unto true Penance?*

A. Firſt, Becauſe this fear alone Converts not at all the heart; nor doth he, who refrains from Sin, on

on no other motive than the fear of Pain, caſt off the will, or affection he hath to ſin; nor would he ſcruple in the leaſt, the committing thereof, could he exempt himſelf from the Pain due unto it. Secondly, Becauſe a true Reconciliation with God conſiſts not with a meer ſervil fear. Thirdly, Becauſe he, who deteſts not Sin, but on the account of his own Intereſt, regards more the damage he fears, than the wrong he doth; and ſo reſents more his own loſs, than the Sin he commits; and ſhuns rather the pain, which would be Juſt, than his own Crimes which cannot be but unjuſt; which clearly denotes the irregularity of ſuch a fear. Fourthly, Becauſe neither God, or our own Reconciliation with him, are otherwiſe thereby ſought, then purely in order to our ſelves; which is to render God ſubſervient to our Iniquities

quities, and make our ſelves the end of him, who ought to be the only end, as he is the beginning, of all. A diſorder as in no other Vertue, ſo conſequently not in that of true Penance, to be met withal.

Q. *What is the third ſtep unto Penance?*

A. The hope we have of the remiſſion of our ſins. It is the Doctrine of the Council of *Trent*, which teacheth, *That the Sinner, conſidering the abundant Mercies of God, changeth the fear he had, into hope; confiding to meet with Pardon, on the Account of the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt.* The Roman Catechiſme alſo ſaith, *That it is this hope of Pardon which inviteth a Sinner firmly to reſolve on the Amendment of his Life.*

Q. *What is the fourth and laſt ſtep, or diſpoſition unto Penance?*

A. The Love of God, whom the Sinner now begins to Love, as the true

true Source of all Vertue, and Justice; and this Love is it which excites in him an Hatred, and Aversion unto sin, wherein true Penance consists. *Love in fine*, saith the Roman Catechisme, *warming our hearts, engendreth that Filial Fear, by which true Children are discerned, and works, with all this good effect, that fearing even in the least to offend God, we come to shake intirely off the habit of Sin: Behold the degrees by which we arrive unto Penance. A Vertue wholly Heavenly, wholly Divine, and unto which a promise of Heaven, as the Holy Scripture assures us, is annex'd.*

Q. *Can it by any passage of Scripture be prov'd, that we cannot without the love of God, rise from sin, or merit the remission thereof: And that no Penance where this Love is wanting, can be true, or at all available to a Reconciliation with almighty God?*

A. The

A. The beloved Disciple tells us, (a) *That he who loves not, remains in Death.* And the Apostle no less assures us, (b) That in Vain, where Love is defective, are other Vertues practis'd. *When with my whole Substance,* saith he, *I shall have reliev'd the Poor, and even deliver'd up my Body to be burnt, what Advantage, if Charity alone be wanting, shall I reap thereby.* For *Anathematiz'd be he, and accurs'd, who loves not our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ,* how laudable soever his other Actions appear.

Little conduceable then to our Justification in the Sight of God, is that Penance, should it even incline us to suffer Martyrdom it self, where that Love, that Charity is not found, which Converts the Heart, by transferring our affections from Creatures to God alone.

(a) Jo. 3. 14. (b) 1 Cor. 13.

IV. In

IV. Instruction.

That the Vertue of Penance exceeds the force of Nature.

Quest. *CAnnot we of our selves conceive that sorrow and detestation of sin, which shall suffice to regain the Favour and Friendship of God?*

Answ. We may well for some Natural, or humane respect, become sensible of our own defaults; but as such a resentment cannot take its rise but from our selves, so can it aim at no other end, than our selves; it being wholly inefficacious towards the working our Attonement with God, unto whom we can never return but by himself; nor love him, unless he give a beginning thereunto, who ought also to be the sole end thereof.

Q. True Penance cannot then be procured without the peculiar Assistance of Divine Grace?

A. No, As hath been already said in the first Instruction.

Q. But can we not of our selves contribute at least to the beginning thereof, and dispose our selves, in Vertue of our own force, thereunto?

A. Not at all, seeing we cannot of our selves, as St. *Paul* teacheth, (a) form any one good thought, it being to God alone we owe our whole sufficiency in that kind: Far are we then from arriving, through any force, or sufficiency of our own, to those High and Eminent Vertues, which must Convert the heart, and Reconcile us again to God. A Verity the Prophet was not ignorant of, when he said unto God, (b) *Having been by thee Converted, Lord, I did Penance, and having been by thee enlightned, I smote my*

(a) 2 Cor. 3. (b) Hier. 31. 19.

thigh,

thi h, observing the disorders of my own heart.

Q. *True Penance is then the Guift of God, a Grace supernatural, and surpassing the Power of a Creature left unto himself?*

A. It is not only a supernatural Gift, but, according to *S. Thomas*, the greateſt in ſome ſort, the moſt admirable, the moſt excellent of all the Works of God. *St. Auguſtine* no leſs affirms, that the Juſtification of a ſinner, which is wrought by the means of Penance, is a greater Work than the Creation of Heaven and Earth.

Q. *Declare how the Juſtification of a ſinner argues a greater Power, than the Creation of Heaven and Earth, yea then of Angels, and Man in the ſtate of Grace?*

A. In the Creation of Heaven and Earth, of Angels, and Men, God made uſe but of a Word alone; but to the Juſtification of a ſinner, 'twas neceſſary that the

Son

Son of God ſhould become Man, and die, to the end to make ſatisfaction for the ſins of Men, which he had Charg'd himſelf with.

Q. *The Fruit of the Death and Paſſion of the Son of God, the promiſes of the Old Teſtament, and Graces of the New, do they all chiefly conſiſt in the Gift of Penance, and Juſtification of a ſinner?*

A.St. Paul ſaith, *That Jeſus Chriſt delivered himſelf up for us, to the end to Redeem us from our Iniquities, and to Purifie us, that he might render us a People peculiarly conſecrated to his ſervice.* (a) And the Prophet *Ezechiel* lays before us the Promiſes of God in theſe words, (b) *I will give unto you a new Heart, and I will ſend a new ſpirit into the midſt of you, and I will take from you your ſtony Hearts, and I will give unto you Hearts of Fleſh, and will cauſe you to walk in the way of my Commandements, and to*

(a) Tit. 2. 24. (b) Ezech. 36. 26, 27.

observe my Laws, and to fulfil them. Now this change of an obdurate heart into a new one, and the guift of a new Spirit, imports nothing else than the Grace of Penance, and Justification of a sinner.

Q. *Can any one claim at the hand of God, as due, this Grace of Penance?*

A. No, For man being become guilty of sin, is not only fallen into an Incapacity of meriting this Grace, but his Offences, together, with the Corruptions of his Heart, justly deserve that God should forever withdraw his Mercies from him. So that if God at any time deny him this Grace, he justly does it, and granting it, he does but what his meer Mercies move him unto. In fine, it would cease to be Grace, should it be due to any merits of ours: which plainly condemns the presumption of those, who, that they may with more freedom sin, flatter themselves with the thought

of

of doing Penance hereafter; as if this Grace were due unto them, and they fully assured thereof.

Q. Doth not God grant unto all Sinners the Grace of doing Penance?

A. It is certain that he refuseth it, through the judgment of his Justice, unto many; for many, as we see, die in their sins; some surprised by death in the Actual committing of them; God not granting them time, or opportunity to do Penance; others meet indeed with both; but such is their Blindness, such their Hardness of heart, the just punishment of sin, that, Abandon'd to a kind of Insensibility, they look on Penance with an eye even of aversion, or at least, through too dangerous, too treacherous a Confidence, defer it to the last; insomuch that a great number either do no penance at all, or but in appearance only: Like unto King *Antiochus*, who burdensom to himself,

ſelf, and touch'd with a greater ſenſe of his own Miſeries, then his Crimes, (a) could not obtain of God that Mercy, which in appearance he ſeemed ſo inſtantly to demand.

Q. *Is it certain that God doth many times puniſh Sinners with this blindneſs, and obduratneſs of heart?*

A. There can no doubt be made thereof, it having been by a Prophet, and an Evangeliſt ſo manifeſtly atteſted: St. *John* (b) ſpeaking of the *Jewes*, Aſſures us, they could not believe, becauſe *Iſaias* had ſaid of them (c) that God had *Blinded their Eyes, and hardned their hearts, leſt ſeeing with their Eyes, and comprehending with their hearts, they ſhould become converted, and he inclined to heal them.* It would be eaſy to alledg many other paſſages of Scripture, Importing, that God

(a) 2 Mac. 9. (b) Jo. 12. (c) Iſa. 6. 9, 10.

Almighty

Almighty Abandons sometimes sinners so far, that they shall never become Converted, nor receive the least Impression from all the Sermons they hear, all the Exhortations which are made unto them, all the Instructions which are given them; nor yet from all the Miracles the Hand of God himself shall work amongst them; Resembling herein the *Jewes*, whom neither the Exhortations, nor Instructions of the Son of God, nor Miracles, though wrought by him in their presence, could convert.

Q. *Is God then the cause of this Obduratenes's?*

A. No, The cause thereof are our own sins; which causing us to abandon God, they oblige him to abandon us unto the darkness, and desires of our own hearts, by denying us the Grace necessary for the recovery of our selves from so deplorable a state, from whence it

proceeds that the corruption of Nature gets the upper hand, and renders it self Master both of the Heart and Will.

Q. *Who are those, that chiefly deserve to be thus abandoned to this blindness mentioned, and obdurateness of heart?*

A. Those first who reject the call of God, justly merit, that he should no more speak unto their hearts, but abandon them to the prudence of their own Flesh.

2*dly*. Those who rashly, & through presumption, believe that their Conversion depends not but on their own will, on which alone it no less depends to do Penance when they please. Those I say justly deserve to be by God abandon'd to their own weakness, and left unto themselves, to the end they may have no ground to glorify themselves, nor cause to impute their Salvation to any Power or Vertue of their own.

3. The

3*dly*. The Grace of a true Converſion is juſtly denyed unto thoſe, who look on it as a thing due; and perſwade themſelves, that, ſhould God refuſe it, he could not without injuſtice puniſh them; whoſe pride to confound, God delights to manifeſt the Rigour of his Juſtice, by denying them the ſuccour of his Mercies.

4*ly*. God yet denies the Grace of Converſion unto thoſe, who vainly perſwade themſelves, they ſhall without difficulty, without labour, or pain, obtain it, and ſet ſo low a value thereon, that far from humbling themſelves, far from mourning, far from applying themſelves as they ought, to prayer, in order to the meriting thereof, they pleaſe themſelves, yea glory in their Crimes; At leaſt, but coldly demand ſo great a grace, dreading Afflictions, dreading ſufferance, dreading the very thought of violence

lence towards themselves; As if so Important a Blessing deserv'd not to be purchased at any rate, yea with the whole ardour of their Souls. 'Tis what God himself desires to render us sensible of; when in the same place, where he assures us, that those, who seek him, shall find him; He adds this condition withall, provided, that we seek him with all our heart, and in perfect sorrow of soul; which also JESUS CHRIST farther yet confirmes by these words full of terrour; (a) *Strive to enter by the Narrow gate, for I affirm unto you, that many shall seek to enter thereat, but shall not obtain it*, because tis without pain, without difficulty, without dispensing with pleasure or ease, they seek to enter.

Q. *Are then the loss of Grace, and state of mortal sin of so dangerous a sequence?*

(a) Luc. 13.

A. Yes

A. Yes, more dangerous than can be expreſſed; it being firſt wholly impoſſible for a ſinner to recover the grace he hath once loſt, or quit the unhappy ſtate ſin hath caſt him into, without recourſe had unto true Penance. 2. Becauſe this grace is the pure Gift of God alone, which he is in no wiſe oblig'd to grant. 3. God juſtly refuſing it to ſo great a number of ſinners, what can be more doubtful, then whether ſuch an one ſhall ever obtain it.

Q. What ought a Sinner then, Abandoned to ſo deplorable a ſtate, to do?

A. He ought firſt, carefully to refrain from whatſoever ſhall farther increaſe the Wrath of God againſt him. Secondly to hear with all due attention his Word; and embrace the inſpirations he ſhall give him: Thirdly, to put faithfully in practice the good Motions he ſhall viſit him withal. Fourthly,

to

to acknowledg his own frailty, as alſo his own unworthineſs to receive ſo great a Grace. Let him, Fifthly, with a due ſenſe bewail the loſs of the Love and Favour of ſo great, and good a God; ſparing neither Tears, nor Prayers, nor Faſts, nor Almſdeeds, nor other Penal Works, how difficult ſoever, which may conduce to the recovery of ſo Ineſtimable a Treaſure.

Q. *Shall a ſinner, perſeverantly complying herewith, aſſuredly obtain the Grace of Penance, and of a true Converſion?*

A. Yes, he ſhall certainly obtain it; It is Chriſt himſelf, who gives us this Aſſurance, ſaying, *Ask and it ſhall be given unto you; ſeek, and you ſhall find; knock, and the Gate ſhall be open'd unto you:* Inſomuch, that let but a Sinner perſevere to Knock, ſhould God, as to an Enemy, deny him entrance, being not as yet reſtored unto his Favour, yet

yet will his importunity force it from him; that is to say, his humble and instant Perseverance shall not fail to wrest from God Almighty the grant of his request.

V. Instruction.

Concerning the Illusion of those, who think themselves in the state of Grace, when they are indeed in the State of Mortal Sin.

Quest. *DO not many believe themselves to be in the state of Grace, who yet really are in the state of Mortal Sin?*

A. There are but too many who resemble the *Pharisees*, of whom Christ said, That they had their Confidence placed in themselves, reckoning

reckoning themſelves amongſt the Juſt; this proud ſort of People, full of themſelves, think themſelves full of good Works, and arrived to an higher degree of Sanctity, than the reſt of Men; whoſe Lives they look not on, but with an Eye of Indignation and Contempt. Which ſecret Pride of theirs, evidenceth their Vertues to be but Hypocriſy; and the Sanctity they boaſt of, but Injuſtice and Impiety. Which caus'd the Son of God to Thunder forth againſt them the moſt formidable of Maledictions, to wit, that they ſhould Dye in their Sins. They ought not to expect from God a milder Reproach, than the Biſhop of *Laodicea* juſtly incur'd; recorded by St. *John* in theſe Words; (a) *Thou ſayſt that thou art rich, that thy Wealth abounds, and ſtand'ſt in need of nothing; and know'ſt not how*

(a) *Apoc.* 3.

Poor,

Poor, how Miſerable, how Naked, how Blind thou art. So Blind indeed was this unhappy Biſhop, in the concern of his own ſpiritual Welfare, ſo much a ſtranger to the ſtate of his own Soul.

Others there are, who, actually being in the ſtate of Mortal Sin, think not at all thereof, nor indeed believe it. And theſe, more nicely deluded, perſwade themſelves, that not to loſe the Grace and Favour of Almighty God, it ſufficeth ſo to demean themſelves, that their Actions prove not highly Criminal. And indeed enquiring into the manner of their whole procedure, it would argue too great a ſeverity to faſten on the worſt of their Actions, the cenſure of Mortal Sin. If quitting their Beds, they neglect to offer up themſelves to God, what is it but a Venial Omiſſion. If the Morning paſs away in the diſpatch of Affairs, in

Coyfeing, Dreſſing, and Adjuſting themſelves; there is more of the unprofitable, more of ſmall vanity therein, than crime: From thence to *Maſs*, where, if perfect Attention be wanting, it ought rather to be imputed to Negligence, than any hainous Contempt: Then to the Table, where the variety of choice Diſhes ſerves rather to prevent offence unto the Pallat, than to adminiſter matter of Pleaſure: And, What great Crime would the Pleaſure uſually taken therein, amount unto? Next, Viſits to be made or received, are reſolved upon. The reſt of the day is allotted to Converſation, which is ſometimes ſerious, ſometimes pleaſant, and ſometimes matter of complement helps out Diſcourſe; but yet due Meaſures are ſtill obſerved. The Serious part is not fallen upon, but to the end, not to fail in matter of Reſpect; and Mirth is but a

pretty

pretty pleaſing kind of humour, proper to ſweeten Converſation: and if a peice of Gallantry chance to be ſtarted, whilſt without heat of Paſſion, 'tis conceived to be without Offence; nor will Paſſion need any great excuſe, provided it mount not to exceſs. Trifles often in Company piece out, 'tis true, Diſcourſe, where alſo the Humours of others, eſpecially thoſe, of whom we are apt to entertain a leſs favourable Opinion, are many times decry'd; in all which, What enormous Crime appears? And if ſome Game be perhaps propoſed, 'Tis rather, ſay they, on the account of Divertiſement, than Intereſt; nor can they conclude any great harm therein. Supper, in fine, enſues; which ended, in like manner, as in the Morning they forſook their Beds, retireing, they betake themſelves to Reſt: In all which, What can juſtly be

deem'd a Crime? 'Tis a courſe of Life ſuitable enough, I confeſs, to the ſuggeſtions of Nature. But doth the love of our own Eaſe, doth the love of innocent Diverti-ſements argue us Guilty of any Great Offence? And ſo judging of theſe Perſons, by what doth in their daily Comportment appear, to comdemn them to a ſtate of Mortal Sin, would be too ſevere. But Searching into the bottom, and ſifting the Affections of the Heart; the true Meaſure of our Innocency or Guilt in the ſight of God; what ſhall we diſcover, but a People full of the Love of themſelves, and conſequently deſtitute of the Love of God? What, but a People, held, by the Maxims of the world, faſt Link'd unto the world, and loving what the world Loves, how contrary ſoever to the Maxims of Chriſtianity, how repugnant ſoever to the Preſcripts of *Jeſus Chriſt?*

Christ? What shall we meet withal, but a People wholly sway'd by Pleasure, by Vanity, wholy interessed in temporal Concerns, wholly disinteressed in the weightier Concerns of their own Souls?

Now who see's not that such a State, being assuredly no state of Life and Grace, can be no other than a state of Sin and Death; For if to love the world, be, as the Apostle teacheth, *To become an Enemy unto God:* (a) And that *the Soul which lives in delights, be already dead:* (b) Is he not then Dead? Is he not an Enemy unto God? that is to say, Cast out of the Favour of God, and deprived by Mortal Sin of Life, the Life of Grace, who Lives not but to the World, nor enjoys himself, but in the enjoyment thereof?

Let us no longer then deceive our selves, out of an erronious

(a) *Jac.* 4. 4. (b) 1 *Tim.* 6.

Perſwaſion, that refraining ſuch Actions as involve mortal Sin, we are ſafe enough, and ſecure from danger of Damnation: No, it ſufficeth to render us lyable thereunto, not to Love God more than the World, or than our Selves, and to defer more to pleaſure, to vanity, to ſelf-intereſt, or the like, than to the Love of God, the Good of our Neighbour, or the Wellfare of our own Souls. Others there are, beſides thoſe mentioned, who having but Confeſſed their Sins, fancy themſelves inſtantly received into Favour, inſtantly re-eſtabliſhed in the State of Grace; little Sollicitous, whether their Confeſſions were with Sorrow duely accompanied, or wrong, to the Divine Juſtice done, be by Satisfaction duely repair'd. As if the bare Confeſſion of their Sins, with how little remorſe ſoever, were all, wherein the Vertue of true

true Penance did consist. An important Point, wherein too many too often abuse themselves; as the following *Instruction* shall make appear.

VI. Instruction.

Of the Illusion of those, who believe that they have True Contrition, and yet are found to be without it.

Quest. *Are Sinners at any time deceiv'd in the point of Sorrow for their Sins?*

A. Yes, for they sometimes take the Sorrow they feel, for true Contrition, which yet proves wholy defective as to that, wherein true Contrition chiefly consists: They think it sufficient thereunto, to acknowledge their Fault, and Confessing it, to demand Pardon for

the ſame; but obſerve not, that, Where the Heart is not truly chang'd, their pretended Sorrow falls ſhort of true Contrition, and little avails them to the Remiſſion of their Sins. Which the Example of King *Antiochus* makes evidently appear: He acknowledg'd his Tranſgreſſions; he with Tears made ſhew of more than ordinary Sorrow; he vow'd Reſtitution of whatſoever he was unjuſtly poſſeſs'd of; he oblidg'd himſelf to ſet the People of *Hieruſalem*, which he had held Captive, at Liberty; to make Rich Preſents to the Temple, to defray at his own Charge, all the Victims, which ſhould be there offered up to the True God in Sacrifice; and to Announce the Greatneſs of his Majeſty and Glory to all the World. Such Promiſes, ſuch Proteſtations did that King make in the Sight and Preſence of God, whoſe Eye, he

he well knew, penetrated the bottom of his Heart, and discovered the most Secret of all his Thoughts; whom therefore he could not pretend to deceive; and as little did it avail him to Dissemble: And yet was this Contrition of his, how Goodly soever in appearance, rejected; nor obtained he the Pardon, which he so instantly demanded.

Q. *Do Sinners often deceive thus themselves in the discernment of true and false Contrition?*

A. But too often, as well appears by what the Fathers of the Church have left Written on that Subject; As also by the Rules, the Holy Councils have prescrib'd, for preventing the Abuses, which frequently arise from the plausible Appearance, which false and deceitful Penance carries with it.

Q. *Is there any danger of Deceit in this kind, in the present Age we live in?*

 A. Ne-

A. Never more; The Love of God, as the *Roman Catechiſm* obſerves, being at preſent grown in the Hearts of Chriſtians ſo cold, that many require not at all to the Remiſſion of Sin, that the Penitent, with his whole Heart, bewail his Offences paſt, or that he be ſenſibly and interiourly touch'd; but that any Sorrow, though feign'd, and only in appearance, doth ſuffice.

Others admit indeed unto the Remiſſion of Sin, a neceſſity of our being truely Touch'd, and as truely concern'd for haveing committed it; but hold withal that the ſole Diſſatisfaction, the ſole Diſpleaſure we have for haveing Offended God, is all-ſufficient to a true Reconciliation, and perfect Attonement with him.

An Errour amongſt Chriſtians, but too frequent, who believe themſelves in the Court of Heaven Abſolv'd,

ſolv'd, if they but Confeſs their Sins with any little Remorſe, for haveing fallen into them, though with as little purpoſe of Amendment, and as ſmall Reſolution of avoiding, for the Future, the occaſions of Sin, or Will to apply a Remedy: Without which, nevertheleſs their Penance, their Contrition, is as Fruitleſs, as their pretentions to a Reconciliation with God are vain. True then, and but too true it is, That the Contrition of many little or nothing avails to the Remiſſion of their Sins; as by this reaſon is clearly Evinc'd. Never were more Confeſſions, never fewer Converſions ſeen: From whence it cannot but follow, That Penance was never more abuſed; ſeeing that Penance cannot, without a true Converſion, be true. Do we not ſee the Life of the greateſt part of Chriſtians, to be but a kind of

Medly

Medly made up of Sins and Confeſſions, of Confeſſions and Sins: And that they preſent themſelves before the Tribunals of the Church, unreſolved to quit their ill Habits, unreſolved to abandon the occaſions of Sin, unreſolved to encounter their own Paſſions, and as little diſpoſed to Apply a Remedy to the Evils they ſeem to deplore. Are they not daily ſeen, notwithſtanding the Sorrow they pretend in Confeſſion to expreſs, to retire from the Sacrament of Penance, as full of Love unto the World, as full of Love unto themſelves, as much devoted to Vanity, to Pleaſure, to Intereſt, as before.

Oh how frequent, how great is the Abuſe of Penance! how few true Penitents! were ſuch Confeſſions Good, could ſuch Penitents be Saved, it could not be true, that a bad Life is ordinarily attended by as bad a Death: Nor could

could it be but falſe, though Atteſted by Verity it ſelf, that the Way to Heaven is narrow, and ſtrait the Gate which enters into Life; and that none enter thereat without Pain, Difficulty, and Sweat; yea, without Violence offered to themſelves. We ſhould rather conclude, That the Way were eaſy, and large the Gate, ſeeing that Men, without an Adue to Pleaſure, to Vanity, to Intereſt; without Conquering their own Paſſions, without laying Hands upon themſelves, entred with ſo much Eaſe: And that, but confeſſing their own Frailty, with any little Sorrow, any ſmall reſentment of their Crimes, how great ſoever, the Benefit of Abſolution were without more adoe obtain'd.

VII. Inſtruction.

From whence it proceeds, That Sinners ſo often deceive themſelves in the Point of True Contrition.

Queſt. *How can it be, That a Sinner ſhould judge the Sorrow he hath for his Sins to be true Contrition, it not being truly ſo?*

Anſw. This firſt happens through Ignorance, whilſt wanting due Inſtruction, he knows not that wherein true Contrition conſiſts, nor the chief Vertues required thereunto; and without which a Reconciliation with Almighty God, cannot, by means thereof, be wrought; ſuch as are Faith, Hope, and Charity; as alſo through want of Ability to diſcern between true and falſe Contrition. So-

Secondly, This proceeds from the Love of our ſelves, which often deceives us, makeing us believe, that we Love that which in effect we do not Love; and that we no longer Love that, which yet we ſtill Love. If any ſpark of Devotion but warm our Hearts, or that we experience the leaſt Averſion unto Sin, we are apt to flatter, Immediately our ſelves with the conceit of our Loving God above all; and Hateing above all, whatſoever we know to be diſpleaſing unto him. As if any ſlight Impreſſion were of force enough to change the Heart.

Thirdly, We deceive our ſelves, by taking what but barely occurs unto the Mind, for real Motions of the Heart; as alſo what but meerly Preſents it ſelf, for fixed Deſigns. And hence it proceeds, That many fancy themſelves already Tranſported with the true Love

Love of God, as ſoon as they ſhall but have ſaid, *My God, I Love thee*; and that all the thoughts they have of a Change of Life, are as many poſitive Reſolutions, and true Converſions of the Heart; ſo little are we vers'd in the true Knowledge of our ſelves.

(a) St. *Gregory* excellently deſcribes this Illuſion, *We are often deluded into a ſtrong perſwaſion*, ſaith this Holy Doctor, *that we Love ſome good Action, which yet indeed we love not at all, or that we love not the glory and vanities of the World, which yet in effect, we Love to that degree, that we even make them the Idols of our Heart.*

Q. *Is it then true, that many deceive themſelves in the Knowledge of their own Contrition?*

A. Yes, for we ſee many, who think themſelves truely Contrite, provided they but with Attention

(a) *Paſt.* 1. p. c. 9.

recite ſome certain Prayer, wherein they find expreſſed, That they are Sorry for their Sins, that they heartily deteſt them, and are rather reſolved to Dye, than Sin again. Theſe Perſons perceive not, that it is their Thoughts only which ſpeak, and not the Heart; and that to Think, and Say, are far different from, to Love, and Will. The Heart holds not alwayes Intelligence with our Thoughts; and it often falls out, that the Heart is not at all, or at moſt, but faintly Touch'd, what e're our Thoughts be, or what Prayer ſoever we recite, and that with the greateſt Attention imaginable. To think then, or by words to affirm, That we are heartily Contrite, is not to have true and hearty Contrition indeed: Nor are they wanting, who read, and recite with ſtrong Application of Mind; the moſt ſelect Sentiments

ments of Penance, and Acts, the most perfect that can be, of Contrition, wherewith Books plentifully furnish them, without haveing the Heart at all touch'd, at least not touch'd to a Conversion. In which kind it is, That many abuse themselves, believing themselves to have form'd a vigorous Act of Contrition, because they have, with Attention of Mind, recited those high Protestations of hateing, flying, and detesting Sin. Let them then disabuse themselves, and know, that true Contrition ought to be lodg'd, not in thoughts, or words, but in the Heart.

Q. *But yet at least, when we find our selves so sensibly touch'd, that it draws even Sighs from the Heart, and Tears from the Eyes, ought then our Contrition to be look'd on, as True and Sincere?*

A. We may be yet deceiv'd therein; for those Sighs and Tears may

may well proceed from a tenderneſs of Nature, and Senſe we have of the Shame, which accompanies Sin, or Pains wherewith it is threatned.

Q. *Do you pretend that it is Fruitleſs to recite ſuch Prayers, as thoſe before-mentioned?*

A. Contrarywiſe, I highly approve thereof; but affirm it an Errour to believe, That the Grace of Penance is, as it were, thereunto annexed; or that we, when we but read, or with Attention recite ſuch Prayers, muſt needs then inſtantly obtain it: Let them in God's Name, then recite them, but let the Heart withal rather ſpeak, than the Tongue or Mind.

Q. *Diſcover yet thoſe other Illuſions, which we are ſubject unto in matter of Contrition?*

A. How Intenſe ſoever our Sorrow be, the fear of Pain works many times more ſtrongly on us, than

than the Love of Juſtice; and the loſs of the repoſe of Conſcience, of temporal Fortunes, of Health, Honour, and the like, makes a deeper Impreſſion than the Offence, though againſt God himſelf; which argues but a pure effect of Nature; and therefore taking it for true Contrition, we but deceive our ſelves. Many, in fine, there are, who as ſoon as they but experience the leaſt Diſſatisfaction for haveing Sinned againſt God, and but faintly deſire to return unto him, fancy themſelves already Converted, already truly Contrite; but thoſe are ordinarily but imperfect Acts of the Will, and but weak Deſires; too weak, whilſt an attachment yet unto Sin remains, to change the Heart; too weak, to purchaſe a Reconciliation with Almighty God. So great an abuſe is it, to think, That all Sorrow for Sin, ought inſtantly to

to be admitted for true Contrition.

Q. *May not one, at the very moment of his committing Sin, be truely ſorry for his committing it?*

A. Thoſe who rather ſin through fear, or for compliance ſake, than an inclination thereunto, would willingly not ſin, and are not a little concern'd to ſee themſelves, out of Human reſpects, drawn to do that, which wounds their Conſcience.

Q. *Doth not that very Reluctance excuſe them; and may they not be properly ſaid to be truly Penitent?*

A. Not at all; ſeeing it diverts them not from doing that which is by God forbidden.

Q. *How can that be?*

A. When but one good is alone propoſed unto the Will, it meets with no demur in the purſute thereof, nothing ballancing the natural Inclination the will hath thereunto:

But

But finding it ſelf engaged between two Evils, or two Goods, neither its Love, or Averſion, run ſo ſmoothly on: For preferring the good it moſt loves, or flying the evil it moſt dreads, it loſeth not nevertheleſs the Inclination it hath for the other; and though it embrace the one, 'tis not yet without a ſecret diſſatisfaction, to find it ſelf debarr'd from the Enjoyment of both.

'Twas *Pilates* caſe, who would willingly not have Committed an act of Injuſtice by condemning *JESUS CHRIST*, whoſe Innocency he doubted not of; but the fear of *Cæſar*'s diſpleaſure was more prevalent with him, than the Love of Juſtice. Nor did *Herod* without a reluctance, pronounce ſentence againſt St. *John* of Death, yet rather choſe to diſpence with Conſcience, then not to comply with a darling Harlot's bloody

bloody requeſt. And 'tis but what daily paſſeth in the Hearts of Sinners; who having not for the moſt part, wholly caſt off the Love of good, being by their own inclinations lead thereunto; nor wholly being without ſome averſion from evil, are yet drawn, by the apprehenſion of ſome evil more nearly threatning them, or love of ſome apparent good, more powerfully alluring them, to engage themſelves in crimes, as acts of Injuſtice, or the like, which willingly they would not commit; and yet committing them not, but becauſe they will; ſeeing that if they had not a will thereunto, they would not ſo abſolutely commit them; this diſlike they have of the ill they actually do, excuſeth them not, nor ought to be looked on as an Act of true ſorrow, ſuch as Chriſtian Penance neceſſaryly requires.

Q. *What*

Q. *What is yet farther required unto true Penance?*

A. Our Sorrow, and Contrition ought to be ſo Vigorous, that neither Fear, Favour, nor complyance ever prevail ſo far with us, as to induce us to do that which the Duty we owe unto God, forbids; but that we be diſpoſed to all loſe, all ſuffer, rather than mortally to offend him.

Q. *Sorrow then alone for our ſins paſt; as to have been, for Example, engag'd in Duel, is not ſufficient for the obtaining of Pardon for the ſame?*

A. No; For this Sorrow takes away neither the Affection nor the Will, we have to Sin, ſomething more is then required to true Contrition; to wit, a will firmly reſolv'd to loſe the vain eſteem, the favour and friendſhip of men, with what elſe ſo ever; yea even Life it ſelf, rather than do that which

which the Law of God forbids: as to Fight, for example in Duel; or but to yeild our conſent unto an action, which implyeth ſin, from whence we cannot but conclude, that many in point of true contrition deceive themſelves; which ought not to be reputed ſuch, if beſides the ſorrow they have, they put not alſo on a ſtedfaſt Reſolution, befall what can, to ſin no more.

Q. *Are not even ſuch Reſolutions ſometimes ſubject to deceit?*

A. Deſires are often miſtaken for Reſolutions, and the ordinary language of Sinners is, that from their hearts they wiſh, that they may never become guilty again of ſuch an Offence; and that their endeavours ſhall be to prevent occaſions of new relapſes thereinto. A mark of the Will's not being as yet ſtrong enough, nor heart as yet converted: But few are found,

who proteſt that they will abſolutely relinquiſh all occaſions, yea, break off all engagements unto ſin; and that rather then again to offend God, they ſhall not value what dangers, what extremities they expoſe themſelves unto.

Not to be then deceived therein, one may Judg of the Firmneſs and Sincerity of ſuch Reſolutions, by the Fidelity they ſhew in the obſervance of them. For to yeild to the firſt temptation, argues them to have been at firſt but faintly made: And to return to their former diſorders, gives but too much ground to ſuſpect, they had but laid them for a time by, the Heart ſtill remaining as unconverted as before.

It often again falls out, that one finds himſelf very ſenſibly concerned for many, or perhaps moſt of thoſe ſins, whereof his Conſcience accuſeth him; and is withal firmly reſolved to fall no more back

for

for the future into them; But yet there remains a criminal attachment of the Heart to ſome one or more ſinful Objects; being either over-maſtred therein by too ſtrong a paſſion, or elſe deluded into as ſtrong a perſwaſion, that this inclination of his is not ſo highly blameable. For we preſume, in the Age we live in, to paliate, yea even to Juſtifie the greateſt part of abuſes, under a pretext of cuſtom, of a preſent mode, or opinion of the World; A pretext, as indeed without all colour of excuſe, ſo too weak to ſecure us from damnation.

Looking then into the heart of Penitents, how few truly Contrite, how few truly Penitent, ſhall we find? How few not deceivers, or not deceived? Not the leaſt ſorrow, the leaſt remorſe accompanying the Confeſſions they make; or if any perhaps do, 'tis but what

the tenderneſs of Nature, or ſome merely human Conſideration excites. So far is it from any converſion of the Heart, ſo far from any diſengagement of our Affections unto ſin.

VIII. Inſtruction.

That it greatly Imports a Sinner ſeriouſly to examin, whether the Sorrow he hath amounts to true Contrition.

Queſt. *CAn you ſhew by any paſſage of the Holy Scriptures, that he who deſires to live according to the Spirit of the Goſpel, ought diligently to inquire into the interiour diſpoſition of his own ſoul?*

A. If you but peruſe the 14th. Chapter of St. *Luke*, you ſhall find that a great number reſorting unto

to *Jesus Christ*, he said unto them; *If any one comes unto me, and hates not his Father and Mother, his Wife and Children, his Brothers and Sisters, yea even his own life, he can be no Disciple of mine. For which of you designing to build a Tower, calculateth not first at leasure, the expence that shall be requisite thereunto, that so he may be the better assured of his being furnished with means to finish the same; lest having laid the Foundation, he fail of bringing it to perfection, and so expose himself to the laughter of those who shall behold his undertakings at a stand? So, whosoever amongst you Renounceth not all he hath, cannot be my Disciple.*

Q. *What mean you by this Tower? And what is signified by the expence, so necessary to the perfecting thereof?*

A. By the Tower, is underſtood Evangelical Perfection; whereunto all Chriſtians are obliged to put an hand; and by the Expence, that we ought to ſpare nothing in order to the raiſing of this Building, and purchaſe of this perfection.

Q. *What doth Chriſt then pretend to teach by this Parable?*

A. He maketh uſe of this Compariſon, the better to give us to underſtand, that to be Diſciples of his, that is, truely to deſerve the name of Chriſtians; 'tis not enough to follow him in exteriour appearance only; as to be preſent at Sermons, to frequent the company of perſons, even the moſt Religious; to receive with diligence the Sacraments, and the like: But that 'tis in the Interiour Diſpoſition the main doth chiefly conſiſt: And that the Inclination we have for the beſt of Friends, for the neereſt

neereſt and deareſt of Allyes, for the goods of Fortune, or of what nature elſe ſoever, ought to be managed with ſo entire a ſubmiſſion to the Will of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and to the Spirit of his Grace; that we be ſtill diſpoſed to Relinquiſh all, rather than to do, or to conſent to any thing, which may endanger the loſs of Gods Grace. He farther yet teaches us by this Parable, that all who will be his, and make profeſſion to follow him, ought ſeriouſly to enquire, how they ſtand in this kind diſpoſed; to the end they leave not the Work, which Grace hath begun, Imperfect; and ſo expoſe themſelves to the deriſion of the Devil.

Q. *This Parable ſeems only to relate unto thoſe, to whom the embracing of the Chriſtian Faith is propoſed: Why apply you it then unto ſuch, as have already embraced it,*

but

but yet forbear not to fall, after profession made thereof?

A. He, who by mortal sin hath once betrayed & lost his Baptismal Grace, ought not to be look'd on so much a Disciple of Jesus Christ, as a Perfidious and Perjur'd person, guilty of the breach of Promise, the most Solemn, the most Sacred that can be made; whose Conversion ought therefore to be narrowly enquired into, without giving too easie credit to what he saith. It is then but reasonable and just, that we attentively consider, and with due deliberation examin, whither the heart be entirely disengag'd, and we firmly resolved to forsake all, to do all, and suffer all, rather than to commit a mortal sin.

Q. *Are we obliged to enquire into the sufficiency of our own strength, in order to the surmounting all the temptations we may at any time encounter withal?* *A.* No,

A. No, for we put not always in execution the good, which we but faintly design, nor is it force or power on our part, which justifyeth us before *God*, but a good and resolute Will. Whereof *St. Peter* hath left us a remarkable example; none can doubt but he was Just, when he expressed a readiness to give up his Life, for his Master Christ; and yet this good Will of his was not strong enough to surmount the fear of Death; and he taught us by his fall, that to do that which is good, 'tis requisite, that we have a stedfast and firm Will to accomplish it.

Q. *Is it expedient for a Penitent to make tryal of himself, and to examin whether he should have courage enough to suffer all Extremities, yea the torments of Martyrdom it self, rather than to commit a mortal sin?*

A. It is not only expedient, but

a

a part of Christian Duty to foresee the occasions which his condition or inclination may engage him in; As to accept, for example, a Challenge given, to the end to demand the assistance of a more Powerful Grace, and arm himself with stronger resolutions: But this experiment of our selves, in relation to contingencies, which are not ordinary, is in no wise advisable; yea the consequence, especially when meeting with a quick and sprightly imagination, may be dangerous; for it would often happen, that they would find themselves so surprized, so moved, and so startled at the only prospect of that which their own fancy had created, that finding all Resistance too weak, the Will it self would relent, and yield unto the Temptation they had unadvisedly cast themselves into.

Q. *Are those out of danger in this*

this kind, who have not the Imagination ſo quick?

A. Thoſe, whom nothing is apt to move, and whoſe Imagination leaves no Impreſſion on the Heart, will eaſily perſwade themſelves, that ſuch an Inſenſibility cannot but flow from the height of Vertue: And ſo will Pride eaſily encline them to believe themſelves both able and ready to embrace the worſt of Sufferance, when the Cauſe of *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall require it: As if Fire and Sword would not more powerfully work upon them, than the *Idæa* which themſelves had framed: And as if Sufferance in colours only, the product of their own Imagination, would make as ſenſible an Impreſſion, as real Torments indeed.

It cannot then but carry Danger with it; ſo to take an account of our own Strength, ſo to make Trial of our ſelves, in caſe of future

ture Contingencies of ſuch a Nature; an Inſenſibility whereof, would but nouriſh Pride; and too great a Senſe, but ſtagger our firmeſt Reſolutions. It ſufficeth to be ready armed againſt preſent Occaſions, or ſuch as we meet but too frequently withal.

Q. *What ought to be done when ſuch thoughts occur; As for example, Whether we ſhould remain ſo firm in the Profeſſion of our Faith, as to endure with St.* Laurence, *the Gridiron, rather than to deny Jeſus Chriſt, and commit a mortal Sin?*

A. No other anſwer ought to be return'd unto ſuch Thoughts, than, that we well know what we ought in ſuch occaſions to do, but know not what we really ſhould do. That we owe our whole Sufficiency to the Grace of *Jeſus Chriſt*, which ſhould He then vouchſafe to Grant us, it would purely prove an Effect of His great Mercy; But

that

that we ſufficiently perform our part, if we but humbly and inceſſantly beg of him, not to permit us to be tempted above our ſtrength.

Q. *Can that Penitent be duely diſpos'd, who, through the knowledge he hath of his own frailty, feareth to fall back in a ſhort time into ſin?*

A. One may be very well diſpos'd, and yet have cauſe enough to apprehend his relaps into Sin; for the Will may be good, and the Perſon firmly reſolv'd to do any thing, whereby to prevent his Fall; Although he find not as yet himſelf ſtrong enough to reſiſt the Temptation, and feareth to yield thereunto. So far then is this Fear from being a Mark of our not being well diſpoſed, that it rather argues a Sorrow for our own diſordered Life, and purpoſe of Amendment, Provided that this Fear make us but to ſhun, with all poſſible care, the occaſions of Sin, and perſeve-

rantly to demand of God the Assistance of his Grace.

Q. *What ought we chiefly, in the Examen of our selves, to insist upon, the better to render our selves assured of the Reality of our Contrition?*

A. We ought to take a serious Survey of our selves, and consider, If God be indeed the prime Object of our Love; If our main Care be to please Him; and to conserve his Grace; If we look on the concern of our own Salvation, as the most Important of all others; And if we abhor Sin as the greatest and worst of Evils. If then our Conscience bear us witness of our being thus dispos'd; and that this Testimony be seconded by the Purity of our Actions, We shall have Just cause to believe, that our Contrition is sincere; And withal to hope, that it will procure the remission of all our Sins.

Q. *May*

Q. *May not farther Aſſurance thereof be yet had?*

A. The beſt Marks of true Contrition are, in the Judgment of St. *Auguſtin*, the deteſtation of Sin, and Love of God; to find the Heart now avers'd from that, wherein before conſiſted its chief delight; to reject that now, as bitter, and diſguſtful, which ſeem'd before ſo agreeable and ſweet. In brief, when that *now* cauſeth Affliction of Spirit, which moſt *before* contributed to the Satisfaction of the Fleſh.

Q. *Is a very ſenſible ſorrow for ſin, together with an abundance of Tears, neceſſarily required unto true Contrition?*

A. No, for theſe ſenſible, and exterior Motions often flow from the natural diſpoſition rather of the Body, than of the Heart: And many there are, who ſhed even floods of Tears, but without being

in the leaſt touch'd or converted in Heart; as many true Penitents are contrariwiſe found, whoſe Sorrow is wholly Intern, without the leaſt exteriour appearance at all thereof.

Q. What are the moſt aſſured Marks of true Contrition?

A. We judge of the Tree by the Fruit it bears, and may then ſecurely preſume our Contrition to be true, when it is accompanied by a change of Life; And when Afflicting our ſelves in the ſight of God, we apply our ſelves fervently, and perſeverantly, to the practiſe of thoſe Works, which humble the Spirit, and chaſtiſe the Fleſh; The beſt means indeed to ſatisfy the Divine Juſtice, to appeaſe the Wrath of God, and to obtain his Grace.

IX. Inſtruction.

That thoſe, who, through their own neglect, receive not due Inſtruction *in matters of Faith; as thoſe alſo, who being by God entruſted with the Care of Inſtructing others, apply not themſelves with due diligence thereunto, have not true Contrition.*

Q. *CAn thoſe have true Contrition, who are ignorant of the principal Points of Faith?*

A. No, becauſe believing not, what they have not learn'd, they cannot but want Faith, the Ground of Juſtification; without which it is impoſſible to pleaſe God.

Q. *Doth it not ſuffice ſlightly to Inſtruct them, during the time of*

Confeſſion, to render them capable of Abſolution?

A. There is but ſmall appearance, that God ſhould on the ſudden beſtow on Perſons, guilty of ſo great Negligence, ſo ſupernatural a Grace, as that of a firm, true, and divine Faith: They ought not then ordinarily to be admitted to Abſolution, but diſmiſs'd, to the end, to ſeek Inſtruction, and prepare themſelves by Prayer, and good Works, to receive the Grace of Faith.

Q. *Ought Abſolution to be denied unto thoſe, who have neglected to learn the Commandements of God, and of the Church, or the Rules of Chriſtian Life, eſpecially ſuch as properly appertain to their own Vocation?*

A. So groſs a Negligence cannot but argue ſuch Perſons little ſollicitous for the concerns of their own Souls, or Diſcharge of thoſe

Obligations, which are Incumbent on them; And ought therefore, without Abſolution, to be diſmis'd, until they ſhall have given good aſſurance of their having applyed themſelves with convenient diligence, to the promoting of their own Salvation, to the underſtanding the extent of their own Duties, and to the acquitting themſelves with Fidelity thereof.

Q. *What is to be done with thoſe, who provide not for the Inſtruction of their Children and Domeſticks, nor allow them convenient leaſure for the procuring thereof?*

A. They ought to be admoniſhed of the ſaying of St. *Paul*, to wit, That he, who neglects the Care of his Family, hath renounc'd his Faith, and is become worſe than an Infidel. Abſolution ought then to be deny'd them, until they ſhall have allowed to their Domeſticks convenient time, and means,

to learn and practiſe the Rules of Chriſtian Life. So Juſt a Severity would inform them, how hainous a Crime it is for Chriſtians, to prefer their own temporal Intereſts, before the ſpiritual Welfare of their Domeſticks, whom they ought, as Brethren, to look upon, and to provide Spiritually for them as ſuch.

X. In-

X. Inſtruction.

Of exceſs and vanity in Apparel, Houſe-Furniture, Banquets, and the like, wherein many without ſcruple continue, who often Receiving the Sacraments, Accuſe not at all themſelves in Confeſſion thereof.

Q. *IS the ſin we commit in this kind more than Venial?*

A. There is no ſmall cauſe to fear that many do often incur mortal Sin thereby: For

Firſt, So great a Tye unto ſuch Vanities, cannot but argue as great a Love for the World, and little, or none, for Jeſus Chriſt. Inſomuch, that although all kinds of exceſs cannot be ſaid to amount to

mortal Sin, yet are the Hearts of ſuch Perſons ordinarily ſo entirely deſtitute of the Love of God, which is the Life of the Soul, that one may ſay, judging according to the interiour diſpoſition they are in, that they are not out of the ſtate of mortal Sin.

Secondly, Becauſe to comply with ſo great an expence, and maintain ſo exorbitant an exceſs, ſome other Commandement of God is often broken; Workmen, and Servants Wages are detained; Debts left unpaid, and Men diſenabled to diſcharge them; Temporal Fortunes are either impair'd, or many Injuſtices committed in the Acquiſition thereof.

Thirdly, Becauſe what is thus diſſipated in ſuperfluities, ought to have been better employed in the Relief of the Poor.

Fourthly, Becauſe the Vanities, we deck our ſelves withal, prove often-

oftentimes Allurements unto Sin; And consequently render us guilty of all the ill Effects they work; all the inordinate Passions they are apt to raise in others; so destructive are they of Christian Modesty; so Repugnant to the Spirit of *Jesus Christ*.

Q. *Is not an immodest Dress more excuseable in Persons of Quality, than in others?*

A. Christian Religion having not abolish'd the difference of Conditions, the difference of Habits, useful for the distinction of the said Conditions, is in no wise forbidden. But this can be no Warrant for the Use of that, which woundeth Modesty, and derogates from the Character of a Christian. Those Persons ought, on the contrary, to consider, That the greater the Quality they own, is, the greater Merit ought they to aspire unto; and that being so much

much the more oblig'd to promote, by the example, they ought to give of Modesty, the Edification of others, by how much their Condition raiseth them above the Rank of others; the Scandal, they give, renders them Guilty of greater Sin. We affect to imitate great Persons, and to endear our selves unto them. From whence it comes, that they no sooner appear in a New Dress, how vain, how immodest soever, but it presently starts up into a Mode, whereby they become responsible for all the Abuses, all the Disorders, all the Crimes which from thence ensue; the pretence of a present Mode, excusing neither the Inventors thereof, nor those that follow it.

Q. *Are not many found Faulty in this kind, who yet constantly frequent, on Sundays at least, and Festival days, the Sacraments; and are observ'd to be remarkably Devout?*

A. 'Tis

A. 'Tis to be Devout, but in exteriour Appearance only: 'Tis an Abuſe of the Sacraments, and a Prophanation of the Sanctity they contain, to preſume, wedded thus to the World, and worldly Vanities, to approach unto them. What Devotion, to defer more unto the World, than to *Jeſus Chriſt*; What Devotion, when our Affections ſpeak us rather Pagans, than Chriſtians; What Devotion, not only not to fear, by the Allurement of our Vanities, to Ruin a Brothers Soul, Redeemed with the Blood of *Jeſus Chriſt*, but to make it our Ambition to pleaſe Men, though with the Diſpleaſure, and Offence of God himſelf.

Q. *Whence comes it that theſe Abuſes are ſo frequent?*

A. St. *Charles Boromæus* aſcribes the growth thereof to the want of Reſolution, which Ghoſtly Fathers, in Adminiſtring the Sacrament of *Penance*,

Penance, often bewray; whilſt flattering ſuch diſguis'd Penitents in their diſorders, they too eaſily Abſolve them; not Examining how they ſtand Interiouſly diſpos'd, nor Admoniſhing them of the Spiritual Damage, the Exceſs of the Vanities, they Affect, is apt to cauſe.

XI. Inſtruction.

Of thoſe who have contracted an habit of ſinning Mortally.

Q. *Doth he eaſily become converted, who is habituated unto Sin?*

A. It hath in the fourth Inſtruction been declared, how difficult the Converſion of a Sinner is; And that it is a work of God's Omnipotency, and an Effect of the Powerful Operation of his Grace. From whence

whence you cannot but Judge of the condition of him, whom a long, and Inveterat habit hath rendred a ſlave to Sin.

St. *Auguſtin* had, to his Grief, experienced the truth hereof, when he thus expreſſed himſelf: (a) *The Devil had in his power my Will, holding me faſt bound, as with a chain: For having once ſuffered the Will to grow depraved; habits engage us, which not being forceably reſiſted, a neceſſity enſues of our continuance in Sin.*

Q. *Did St.* Auguſtin *eaſily ſurmount thoſe his ſinful Engagements?*

A. No, not without great pains, and great labour on his part, with many a ſharp encounter: Of which himſelf gives an account, in theſe Words. *I had a Will, my God, to ſerve thee with a Love entirely pure: But this Young, and Infant Will of mine, was too feeble to Maſter that other, which had gained ſtrength, by*

(a) L. 8. Conf. c. 5.

having

having been long habituated unto evil. Thus had I two Will's, the one Old, the other New; the one Carnal, the other Spiritual, which assaulted each other, cruelly tortering my soul: By which it appeareth, that the Conversion of St. *Augustin* was not wrought without many a Conflict; and that the Conversion of a soul engag'd, by habitude in sin, cannot but prove a work of greatest difficulty.

Q. *What ought one to Judge of him, who, upon the first good motion in order to an amendment of life, thinks himself already converted; and pretends, without more adoe, to Sacramental Absolution?*

A. Such good motions ought to be look'd on, as a fair disposition towards a Conversion: But to think himself already converted, is not a little to deceive himself. Those seeds then of Grace and Salvation, ought to be well cultivated; but he

ought

ought not to be admitted to Absolution, till he hath brought forth fruits worthy of Penance, the marks of a true and sincere Conversion.

Q. *But why think you that he deceives himself?*

A. Because many a Conflict, length of time, great labour, plenty of tears, and as many sighes, are ordinarily pre-required to the obtaining of a new Spirit, and a new heart; especially when long and strong habits of Sin have taken root. Inclinations and Habits are not lost in an instant; nor is so great a Victory, as that over our selves, gained at the first assault. An heart sway'd by Avarice, and Impudicity, becomes not on the suddain liberal, and chast: We die not in a moment unto pleasure and interest. The first Motion of Grace it self converts not such an heart.

Q. *Can-*

Q. *Cannot God then in an Instant convert the most obdurate of hearts?*

A. He can without doubt; because mans heart being in the hand of God, he can turn and change it as it best pleaseth Him; and that in an Instant, if he will: But he proceeds not ordinarily so, in the Conversion of Sinners long habituated unto Sin; He draws them not with a word only, out of the *Abyss*, into which they are fallen: 'Tis not the first shine of Divine Grace, which totally dissipates the darkness, they walk in; Nor gaines He the heart at the first sensible approach his Love makes. 'Tis true that God hath in a moment converted some few, and that great Sinners, unto himself; but such Conversions are rather not Examples, but Miracles, indeed in the order of Grace.

Q. *Is it the opinion of the Fathers of the Church, that the Conversion of*

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a Sinner is a work of ſo great difficulty, and which requires ſo much labour and time, eſpecially when Habits of ſo ill a nature, have taken root?

A. 'Tis what doth frequently in their Writings occur; St. *Cyprian* tells us, (*a*) that a deep wound is not cured, but by length of time, and application of many remedies. St. *Baſil*, (*b*) That great Sins are not remitted, but by great, and reiterated Works of Penance; nor without the bitterneſs of many tears, and thoſe accompanied with continual watches, and faſts. St. *Auguſtin* ſpeaking of Mortal Sin; excludes it from hopes of Pardon, where the utmoſt eſſayes of an humble and contrite heart, where Affliction of Spirit, and true Penitential ſorrow prepare not thereunto the way. He alſo elſewhere

(a) *Trac de lap.* (b) *ho. in hæc Verb.* attend. &.

re-

requires, to the ſubduing of Vicious habits, the ſeverity of Penance. To the ſame effect do alſo the reſt of the Fathers, treating of Penance, ſpeak.

Q. *Is not God alwayes ready to receive into Favour even the greateſt Sinners, when they fly unto him?*

A. Yes: Himſelf having by his Prophet Aſſured us (*d*) that at what time ſoever we ſhall ſeek our Lord God, we ſhall find him. But ordinarily, we comply but ill with the Conditions required thereunto: The Prophet adding, (*e*) provided, that we ſeek him with all our heart, and in perfect bitterneſs of ſoul.

God deſires not the death of Sinners, nor gives He them aſſurance of eternal Life, but on condition, that they ſo deteſt their ſins, as to fall no more back into them; that they walk in newneſs of Spirit,

(*d*) Deut. 4. (*e*) Ezek. 18.

and

and Heart; that they keep his Commandements, and observe the Rules of Justice, &c. Now all these Conditions, the observance whereof God so rigorously demands, are the pure Guifts of his Grace, not to be obtained, but by many teares and Prayers.

XII. Instruction.

Of those, who fairly promise an Amendment of Life, but love too well themselves firmly to resolve to put in practise the Exercises of true Penance.

Q. CAn *Irresolute, and degenerous Souls, Pursuers of pleasure, be saved?*

A. The Council of *Trent* declares expresly the contrary; teaching that we ought to work our Salva-

Sess. 6. c. 13.

tion

tion with Fear and Trembling; with Labour, Watching, Almes-Deeds, Prayers, Fasts, & other pious Exercises, proper to a Christian Life.

Q. *Can you prove by any passage of Scripture, by which God himself speakes, the necessity of so great pains, Solicitude, Watching, Fasts, and Prayer, to the working our Salvation?*

A. Listen to what the Holy Ghost saith in the Holy Scriptures unto us, (a) *Strive to enter by the Narrow Gate, for I assure you, that many shall seek to enter thereat, and shall not obtain it*; (b) *Watch then, Praying without Intermission.* (c) *Stand on your Guard; Watch, and Pray,* (d) *be Vigilant, remain firm in your Faith, act manfully, put on the armour of vigour, and strength.* (e) *Be sober, and Vigilant, because*

(a) Luk. 13. (b) Luk. 21. (c) Mar. 13. (d) 1 Cor. c. 6. (e) 1 Pet. 5.

your

your Adverſary the Devil, roves, like a roaring Lyon, up and down, ſeeking whom he may devour; Reſiſt him then, remaining ſtedfaſt in your Faith. (f) *Thoſe who engage in the Liſts, obſerve with all exactneſs the Laws of Temperance, whil'ſt yet 'tis but a corruptible Crown, they pretend unto: As for my own part, I run, and run not at a venture; I fight, and fight not with the Air. But I chaſtize my body, and I bring it under ſubjection, leaſt Preaching unto others, I become my ſelf a Reprobate.* (g) *He who contends in the Publick Games, is not Crown'd, till he hath valiantly combated, according to the Laws, thoſe Games preſcribe. Thoſe who belong to Jeſus Chriſt, have Crucified their Fleſh, as alſo their Paſſions,* and their Irregular Deſires.

After all which, Judge I pray, if theſe delicate, and tender ſouls

(f) 1 Cor. 5. (g) 2 Tim. 2.

can

can claim any part in Jesus Christ, and what pretention they can alleadge unto that Crown, which is not promised, but to those, who shall so vigorously have subdued their own Inclinations, and had so vigilant an Eye to the concern of their own Souls.

Q. *When such persons find themselves touch'd with sorrow for their Sins, and Promise amendment, but want yet the courage to encounter with themselves, or to undergo those Penal Works, which are requisite for the Advancement of their own Salvation, ought not one to believe them truly Contrite, & as truly Converted?*

A. What promises, or protestations soever they make, we are not to heed such Conversions, as long as the Only mention of labour, or difficulty thus deters them, but they ought to be numbred amongst those of whom Christ said, They desire indeed to enter by the

narrow

row gate, but cannot; becauſe they love too well their eaſe. They ſtill retain a kind of Inclination unto good, as alſo of averſion from evil, & feign would live and die in the ſtate of Grace; but cannot reſolve to uſe violence towards themſelves, nor to exchange the ſweets of this Life for the Croſs of Jeſus Chriſt; without which nevertheleſs the Grace of a true Converſion is in vain pretended unto.

Q. Do not ſuch Perſons however perſwade themſelves, that their Contrition is true, and their reſolutions of an amendment firm and ſincere?

A. Yes doubtleſs, and yet they but deceive themſelves; For were their Reſolutions ſuch indeed, and could they be juſtly aſcribed to a true Converſion of the Heart, they would ſoon find themſelves enclin'd to embrace whatſover ſhould but in the leaſt promote their own ſpiritual good; and lend but a deaf

Ear to what Self-Love ſhould, to the prejudice of their ſouls ſuggeſt.

Q. *From whence comes it, that ſo many are found in ſo Important a Point deceiv'd?*

A. The Devil, with little difficulty perſwades them, that Mortal ſin may be avoyded, without a laſt farewel to eaſe, without our renouncing the Contentments of this Life, and that ſuch ſtrict Faſts, ſuch painful Watches, ſuch continued Prayers are wholy needleſs thereunto. That 'tis to Cloyſters that ſuch Auſterities properly belong: but that thoſe, who live in the World, ought to live according to the ſtile of the World; being not oblig'd to be ſo devout, or to addict themſelves to thoſe Corporal Auſterities, from which they are, by their ſtate of life diſcharg'd. That tis enough for them, to have a will not to fall into mor-

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tal Sin; but that to take ſo ſevere an account of the Interiour diſpoſition of their own hearts, to enquire ſo narrowly into the truth of their Contrition, is to be too ſcrupulous, and too miſerably to torment themſelves.

Q. *By what means are theſe deceits of the Devil to be avoyded?*

A. By reſiſting him; and adhering, by a firm Act of Faith, to thoſe Evangelical Verities, here above-mentioned. They ought alſo to reflect, that thoſe, who live in the World, are more dangerouſly expoſed unto temptations: which being unable to overcome, without the continual Aid, and Powerful Aſſiſtance of Divine Grace, which is not obtain'd, but by the means of Sighs and Prayers, they are oblig'd without Intermiſſion to Watch and Pray.

2*ly.* That though the Spirit be prompt, the Fleſh is frail: ſo that,

being not held by continual watches, and pains, in ſubjection to the Spirit, it cannot contain, but abandons it ſelf to its own deſires.

3*ly*. That 'tis not to Perſons only, living under a Monaſtick Rule, but to all who profeſs the name of Chriſtians, that Chriſt ſaid, (a) *If any one will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up daily his Croſs, and follow me.* A Chriſtian though in the World, ought not to be of the World, that is, he ought no longer to live according to the Spirit, and maxims of the World: For, (b) *If any one love the World, the Love of our Heavenly Father is not in him. The love of the World carries an Enmity with it againſt God.* (c) *And Conſequently, who becomes a Frind to the World, renders himſelf an enemy unto God.* To be then a Chriſtian, is to converſe

(a) Luc. 9. (b) 1 Jo. 2. (c) Jac. 4.

in

in the World, as if he were no part thereof, and to make uſe of the things of the World, as if he uſed them not; which is to ſay, without any engagement, without any tye of our Affections to the World.

If we but attentively conſider theſe ſo great and ſo important verities, we ſhall not eaſily ſuffer our ſelves to be miſlead by thoſe dangerous Illuſions, the profeſs'd Enemies of our Spiritual and Eternal Good, the Devil, the World, and Fleſh, hourly lie in wait to circumvent us withall.

Q. *Do not many frequent the Sacrament of Penance, who are not yet firmly reſolved to Crucifie their own Fleſh, to curb their Inclinations, to Watch, Faſt, and Pray to that degree, as is required to the drawing down the Grace of God upon us?*

A. The number of ſuch perſons is but too great, and they are prin-

cipally thoſe, who wholly devote themſelves to Vanities, to Pleaſures, to Eaſe, to Divertiſements; wholly paſs their time in Games, Toyes, and Idleneſs, allowing with difficulty enough: A moment only to thoſe Affairs, where on the concern of their Eternal ſafety depends. Theſe poor ſouls are too nice, too delicate, to venture, with a generous Reſolution, upon any thing, which a true Converſion requires; and therefore, make they what promiſes they will, their words ought not to be relyed upon.

Q. *What ought then a Confeſſour in ſuch a caſe to do?*

A. He ought with Prudence to obſerve the Ordinance of St. *Charles*; which enjoyns, that Abſolution be in ſuch a caſe ſuſpended, till they ſhall have given more aſſured marks of their Converſion.

Q. *Ab-*

Q. *Absolution would then be for a long time deferr'd, for it seldom happens, that any change, or amendment of Life ensues.*

A. When a Confessor, endow'd with the Light of Knowledg, and enflam'd with Pastoral Zeal, applies himself, with due diligence thereunto; It often falls out, that the charitable Endeavours of the one, and the humble Submission of the other, draw down a Blessing from Heaven upon both; And that God Almighty Illuminates their Understandings, and warms with his Love their Hearts: And then it is, that with Confusion resenting the failure of their Duty, as well towards God, as their own Souls, they begin to bewail their tepidity past, and life unprofitably spent; And put on New Resolutions to practise, with an Holy Fervour, what Exercises soever true *Penance*, or Christian Piety shall oblige them unto.

But

But ſhould but few yet become Converted, it would be no Warrant at all, for the admitting of ſuch indiſpos'd Perſons unto Abſolution; nor ought we much to wonder, that ſo few amend their Lives; Verity it ſelf having Taught us, That the Way, leading to Damnation, is broad, and that many walk therein; And that although many are ſaid to be Called, few yet are Choſen, and the number of the Elect is ſmall.

XIII. Inſtruction.

Of thoſe who frequently Confeſs their Sins, and as frequently fall back into them.

Q. *MAy not a Sinner truly Converted, fall back again into mortal Sin?*

A. He

A. He may: Becauſe the Grace he received at his Converſion, takes from him, neither the Inſtability of his Will, nor his Proneſs unto Evil.

Q. *But can a Sinner, who, after his Converſion, hath often relaps'd into Sin, become again Converted, and yet again fall back?*

A. That may happen, during the whole courſe of his Life; this preſent Life being a State determined, neither to Good nor Evil; but a middle State, between that of the Bleſſed, who cannot fall, and that of the Damned, who cannot riſe: One may then, during the whole time of this Life, do Well, and do Ill; One may Fall and Riſe again: And as no Time, or Age excludes us from a poſſibility of Riſing again, with divine Grace's Aſſiſtance; ſo doth neither Time nor Age, exempt us, carrying humane Frailty about us,

from

from Relapſing into Sin.

Q. *Are then our frequent Relapſes a reaſonable ground to doubt of the Reality of our Contrition.*

A. Yes: For though Humane frailty be ſo great, that, how eminent ſoever our Sanctity be, we may yet Fall; yet is there ſmall appearance of the Reality of our Converſion, when we Fall, with ſuch facility, into mortal ſins, and that in ſo ſhort a time.

Q. *Explicate your ſelf by ſome compariſon.*

A. Although the Friendſhip of the World carry ſo little of Stability with it, that it may, in a moment, be chang'd into Hatred, as Hatred alſo may into Friendſhip; ſhould yet any one load inceſſantly another with Injuries, perſecuting him with daily Outrages, with continual Affronts; yet ſo, as not to fail each Sunday to demand his Pardon, and that with new

new Proteſtations of being his faithful Friend; Would ſuch an one be thought well in his Wits, ſhould he Credit ſuch Proteſtations, and, with Embraces, continue him in his Catalogue of Friends? Can we then, without forfeiture of our Prudence, perſwade our ſelves, That the Converſion of thoſe Perſons can be real, who having often, and Mortally, offended God, and made as often Proteſtations of Sorrow for the ſame, and again, as often renew'd their Purpoſes of offending Him no more, continue nevertheleſs ſtill to Offend Him, ſtill to add Sin to Sin; and think themſelves Acquitted, if they ſhall again but renew their Proteſtations of hearty Sorrow, and wonted Reſolutions of offending Him no more. What can it be leſs, than an Injury done unto God, to imagine, That he either knows not theſe falſe Penitents, or that he

receives

receives them again, as true Converts, into Favour?

Would not those persons then, whom God hath entrusted with the dispensation of those Sacred Misteries, betray as well their fidelity, as their Prudence, should they suffer themselves so to be deluded by fair Words, and heed such resolutions, void of all Solidity; or lightly believe, that the Treasury of the Graces, and Merits of Jesus Christ, lay open unto those sad souls, who by their Impenitence, and iterated relapses, have rendred themselves just Objects of the Divine Indignation, and Vessels of the Wrath of God.

Q. *Is it also the constant Judgment of the Holy Fathers that they cannot be truly Converted, who fall often back into mortal Sin?*

A. Frequent relapses have alwayes been by them taken for so certain a mark of false Contrition,

on, that they have unanimouſly, as a certain truth, maintained, that they who fall ſo often back into Mortal Sin, were never truly converted, nor ought to be held; for ſuch, till better proof thereof, then fair promiſes and bare words, appear. St. *Clement* of *Alexan.* ſaith, (*a*) That ſo confuſed a mixture of Penances and Relapſes, rendreth us like unto thoſe, who never arrived unto the Knowledge of true Faith, with this only difference, that theſe counterfeit Penitents know the ill they commit. And a little after addeth; That to ask continual Pardon for the Sins, we continually commit, carries with it ſome ſhew indeed of Penance, but carries with it little of Truth. Nor is it, but what the other Doctors of the Church do alſo Teach. It ſhall here ſuffice to recite the *eleventh Can.* of the *third* Council of *Tol-*

(*a*) l. 2. Stro.

ledo; which expresly condemns those false Penitents, who pretend a Right unto Sacramental Absolution, as often as they shall fall back into Sin. *Having been inform'd*, say the Fathers of this Council, *that certain Persons, in some Churches of* Spain, *presume to do Penance for their Sins, not as the Cannons prescribe, but after a manner too notoriously scandalous; perswading themselves, that the Priest is still, and as often oblig'd to admit them to a Reconciliation, as it shall please them to fall into Sin. The Holy Council to put a stop to so abominable a Presumption, ordaineth, That, in the Administration of the Sacrament of Penance, what hath been by the Ancient Cannons Ordain'd, be regularly observ'd.*

Q. *Are Confessors obliged to the Observance of the Rigour of the Ancient Cannons of the Church?*

A. Although that Ancient Rigour

gour be much by cuſtom Relax'd, and the Church no longer obligeth us to thoſe great Severities, which the Cannons had anciently for each Sin ordain'd; yet cannot Confeſſors dilpence with Penitents in the point of Satisfaction, due to the Divine Juſtice offended; nor with their appeaſing, by true Contrition, and Works worthy of Penance, the Wrath of God. For it would be to abuſe the clemency of the Church, and the Authority Chriſt hath entruſted them withal; ſhould they preſume to Abſolve thoſe, who by the ſmall Amendment of their Lives, and frequent Falls, give but too much ground to believe, That their Contrition is not as yet ſincere, nor real, and their Converſion true.

Q. *Seeing that a Confeſſor abſolves a Sinner once fallen after Baptiſm; why may he not alſo do it, after many and frequent Falls?*

A. The Reaſon not only is, becauſe, having in an higher meaſure abuſed the Mercies, and Goodneſs of God, he hath rendred himſelf leſs worthy of his Grace; and fallen into a far worſe Condition than before: But alſo, becauſe a Confeſſor cannot, with prudence, rely on Promiſes, which a Penitent hath ſo often broken: Nor is it but Juſt, that he expect better Aſſurance, then that of bare words, where Reaſon ſo apparently renders the ſincerity of his Contrition liable to Suſpition. And this it is, that Prieſts ought forceably to Inculcate unto Sinners, guilty of ſo frequent Relapſes, and Admoniſh them well to weigh that terrible ſaying of St. *Bernard*; *That as a Dog, returning to his vomit, raiſeth a greater Horrour in others, than when he firſt caſt it up.* So he, who after the Grace of Pardon once obtained, returns to his firſt

Diſ-

Diſorders; entitles himſelf to a deeper ſhare of Damnation, then before.

Q. *Is there not Joy in Heaven, when a ſinner as frequently becomes Contrite, and as frequently Converted, as his Relapſes into Sin are frequent?*

A. What great cauſe is there of Joy, when a ſick Perſon, after ſome ſmall appearance of Amendment, falls immediately back? For what can ſuch Relapſes purtend, but death. In like manner, when the Eye of Heaven beholds the condition of a Sinner, no otherwiſe bettered, than by a meer forbearance for a while to Sin, and that he quits on no other deſign, the diſorders of his Life, then to plunge forthwith again himſelf into them; What great motive of Joy doth it afford? Seeing the Inconſtancy of ſuch pretended Converſions, ſuch counterfeit Contri-

tions, can preſage no better End, than Damnation for Eternity.

Q. *It follows then, that ſuch inconſtant Converſions prove ſeldom Real, and ſuch Contritions ſeldom True?*

A. 'Tis undoubtedly ſo: For who can queſtion, ſpeaking of one truly Contrite, what Chriſt Affirmed; to wit, That there ſhall be greater Joy in Heaven for one only Sinner doing Penance, than for *Ninety Nine* Juſt, who need it not. Now what Appearance is there, that this ſhould be verified of a Sinner, the courſe of whoſe Life ſeems to be nothing elſe, then to Sin, and to Repent; to Repent and Sin. It cannot then be but a great Truth, that ſuch an one is no true Penitent, that is to ſay, A Sinner truly, and indeed Converted.

Q. *What ought a Confeſſor to do, meeting with ſuch Penitents?*

A. He

He ought to repreſent efficaciouſly unto them the danger of the ſtate they are in: charitably to Inſtruct them how, and by what means to work their Deliverance: He ought alſo to mind them of the Occaſions they are to decline, with what they are to do, the better to merit the Grace of a true Converſion; and to Exhort them to a firm Reſolution of ſecuring hereafter none but God alone. Nor ought he as yet, as the Method of St. *Charles* well preſcribes, To receive them to Abſolution, till they ſhall, by evident Proofs, have aſſured him of a Change, and that they now are no longer what they were.

Q. *How long ought Abſolution, in ſuch a caſe to be ſuſpended?*

A. For a longer or ſhorter Time, according to the Interiour Diſpoſitions of the Penitent, the Care he takes for his Amendment, and

Zeal, wherewith he applies himſelf to the Practiſe of thoſe Exerciſes, which the Nature of Penance obligeth him unto. Nor is it but expedient, that he often confer, during the ſaid time, with his Confeſſor, to the end, the better to acquaint him with the State of his Conſcience, and to receive thoſe ſalutary Inſtructions, which ſhall be requiſite.

Q. *Is not the refuſal of Abſolution a Wrong done unto a Penitent; eſpecially if he conſent not thereunto?*

A. Not at all! Nay, a Confeſſor, when he ſhall find it to conduce to a Penitent's Spiritual Good, may prudently, for a time, defer it, though he find him not otherwiſe Indiſpos'd: With greater Reaſon then may he do it, having Juſt cauſe to fear, yea to believe, That the Diſpoſitions, requiſit to the Receiving of Sacramental Grace, are wanting. Ab-

Abſolution may alſo, in the Opinion of all Divines, be Juſtly ſuſpended, until ſuch time, as a Penitent ſhall have comply'd with the Penance enjoyn'd; in caſe he be found, through negligence, or contempt, to have fail'd in the Performance of that, which had been in his former Confeſſion Impos'd; So groſs a contempt, or negligence, leaving Juſt ground to fear, that he will no better perform the next. on Juſter grounds then may Abſolution be ſuſpended, when no Change at all of Life appears: And a Confeſſor hath alſo cauſe to fear, That, notwithſtanding all the Proteſtations, all the fair Promiſes his Penitent ſhall make, he will no more endeavour an Amendment now, than he formerly did, after all thoſe goodly Reſolutions, in his precedent Confeſſions made.

Q. *But what if a Penitent chance to die in the Interim of that ſuſpenſion?*

A. Abſolution ought not, in caſe of eminent danger of death, to be delay'd; provided a Penitent give but any token of his being well diſpos'd. And in the like caſe of neceſſity, Abſolution, though before ſuſpended, may by any Prieſt be given. In brief, ſhould death ſurprize a Penitent, whoſe Abſolution had been defer'd, the Suſpenſion thereof would be of no prejudice unto him, provided he were but really in heart Converted, and actually and truly Contrite. The Church having always believed, that Sacramental Abſolution is, in ſuch a caſe, by the Mercyes of God ſupply'd.

St. *Ambroſe* believ'd the Emperor *Valentinian*, though without Baptiſm actually receiv'd, the Adminiſtrating whereof had been defer'd, to have yet Dyed in the State of Grace. And yet is not Baptiſm leſs neceſſary to Salvation, than

than Absolution. But when the Heart of such a Penitent is not truly Converted, it more avails both the Penitent & Confessor, so to have had that Absolution suspended, which neither the Confessor could give, nor Penitent, without Sacriledg, Receive.

Q. *But is it not a thing full of Terrour, to die without the Benefit of Absolution?*

A. It is far more Terrible to Dye in Mortal Sin, which Absolution, given to those, who are not Converted, prevents not; but contrariwise, makes them, when Receiv'd, to dye guilty of Sacriledge, a greater Sin; and so but increaseth their Damnation. Is it not strange, that they, who, when they abandon themselves to Sin, apprehend not Death; should stand in such Apprehension of Death, when but the motion of doing Penance is made unto them.

Suspend but their Absolution, and

and they ſtrait deſpair, who hoped too much, when occaſions of ſatiſfying their vicious Inclinations, favour'd them. As if a greater ſhare in God's Mercies were due to Sinners, obdurate, in Wickedneſs, and in actual Rebellion againſt Heaven, then to thoſe, who do Penance, and ſubmit themſelves to the Ordinances of the Church.

Q. The Apprehenſion then of being ſurpriz'd by Death, before Abſolution can be obtain'd, is no ſufficient pretence, for the not ſuſpending thereof?

A. Were that a ſufficient Pretence, the Conduct of the Church of God were to be condemn'd; whoſe uſual cuſtom it was, not to Abſolve thoſe, who had fallen into ſome Notorious Crimes, till they had undergone many Years of Penance. Baptiſm it ſelf was alſo wont to be deferr'd till the Feaſts of *Eaſter*, and *Pentecoſt*; the uſual

times

times appointed by the Church for the Administring thereof: By which it plainly appears, That the Apprehension of Death, before Absolution obtain'd, is no sufficient Pretence, for the not deferring thereof, principally where Habits are contracted, and Penitents engag'd in continual occasions of Sin.

Q. *But how are Penitents to be dealt with, who often change their Confessours, never declaring, that they have at other times fallen into those Sins, which they then accuse themselves of?*

A. Prudence, and Duty oblige a Confessour, to examin his Penitent, as to the Habits he hath contracted, and Relapses he is subject unto, when he shall have observed the Sins he Accuseth himself of, to be of that kind, unto which Men are most habituated, and fall ordinarily back into.

Q. *But*

Q. But what if a Penitent refuse to answer thereunto; thinking it sufficient to accuse himself of such Sins only, as he shall have, since his last Confession committed?

A. Should a Sick Person refuse to discover to his Physitian, the state of his Distemper; of what durance it is; how many accesses his Feavour hath met with, and the like: Who would not say, That he but mock'd his Physitian, and sought not really a Cure for his Disease? In like manner, if a Penitent refuse to express himself, as to his Relapses, and Habitude he hath to Sin; what doth he but deride his Confessour, or rather indeed, *Jesus Christ*, whose place he but supplies; and renders the Distemper of his Soul incurable? A Sick-Man is otherwise to be govern'd in the Progress of his Infirmity, than at first. A Sinner in like manner, waxen Old in Vice,

or

or Guilty of continual Relapſes, ought, after a different manner, to be treated, from him, whoſe ſinful Diſtemper but begins.

XIV. Inſtruction.

Of Penitents, who continue in the occaſions of Sin.

Q. *What is underſtood by the Occaſions of Sin?*

A. That which cauſeth us to offend God, or draws us into danger thereof: whether it inclines us of its own Nature thereunto, or that it happens through any Engagement, Habit, or Frailty of our own.

Q. *What call you an immediate Occaſion?*

A. That from which Sin ordinarily follows.

Q. *Is*

Q. *Is it a mortal Sin, to continue in the immediate occaſion of committing it?*

A. Yes: And though it ſometimes happen, that we Actually commit it not, we nevertheleſs ordinarily incur Mortal Sin, as often as we put our ſelves into the Occaſion thereof, a Thing which few reflect on, and as ſeldom Accuſe themſelves of.

Q. *Can a Penitent believe his Contrition to be true, who quits not the Occaſions of Sin, or quits them not but for a time?*

A. He cannot with Reaſon believe it; for 'tis to will the Sin, not to avoid that, which caſts us into danger thereof; or is ordinarily the cauſe of our committing it. It cannot then be, that one ſhould have a ſincere, and firm purpoſe of falling no more into Sin, where a firm Reſolution is wanting of flying all Occaſions inducing thereunto.

Q. *But*

Q. *But are there not ſome Occaſions, which cannot be avoided, without falling into ſome other Sin?*

A. Yes; An Husband, for example, who cannot forſake his Wife, if it ſo fall out, that through his own frailty, ſhe be unto him an immediate Occaſion of Sin, not to be avoided, without the committing of another Sin.

Q. *What ought, in ſuch a Circumſtance, to be done?*

A. Firſt, Of two Evils, the greater is to be ſhunn'd; 2*ly*. The Occaſion, which ariſeth from ſome Paſſion, or Frailty of our own, ought rather to be avoided, than that, which our Condition, and ſtate of Life expoſeth us unto; provided, ſuch a State be not of its own Nature evil. 3*ly*. The Grace of God ought to be, with profound Humility, and ſelf-Confuſion, implored, to the end, the more effectually to encounter, and van-

vanquish this Passion of ours; as also, to break off all Engagements, and to resist the first Thoughts, which shall surprize us, together with the first Enticements unto Sin. 4ly. We ought to apply our selves to Actions of Piety and Vertue; especially such as shall be most opposite to the Inclination and Passion, which chiefly causeth our Fall.

Q. *If the occasion of Sin cannot be avoided without loss, or considerable damage, is one then obliged thereunto?*

A. Yes; What loss, what affront, or other prejudice soever shall ensue. But yet if such an occasion did chance to happen through the frailty of the Penitent, and that a Confessour discover'd in him a more than Ordinary fervour, together with a firm and sincere resolution to undergo, whatsoever he shall be advised unto,

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in Order to the humbling of himself, & disposing himself for the obtaining the powerful assistance of Gods Grace; some time may be allotted him to make tryal, and exercise himself therein, without retrenching, all at once, the said occasions. But let him here take heed, he flatter not his Penitents, nor rely on words, which would be to abuse both himself and them.

Q. *Is it not to be, as well too scrupulous, as too severe, thus to oblige Penitents, to quit all occasions of sin, what Inconvenience soever arrive thereby?*

A. 'Tis but the severity, which the Gospel prescribes, and but the Conduct of *Jesus Christ*. Of whom it might be as well demanded, why he was so Scrupulous, and so severe, as to say, (a) If thy right Eye, that is, whatsoever is dearest in this life unto thee, occasion thy

(a) Mat. 5.

fall,

fall, pluck it out, and caſt it from thee: And if thy right hand, that is, whatſoever is moſt uſeful unto thee; be unto thee an occaſion of Ruin, cut it off, and caſt it alſo from thee; ſo it is more available unto thee, that one Member of thy Body Periſh, then that the whole be caſt into Hell.

Which is in effect the ſame, as if Chriſt ſhould ſay; if any thing there be, which occaſions our fall into ſin, though as dear unto us, as the Apple of the Eye, or as neceſſary as our Right Hand; yet ought we to relinquiſh it; the ſuffrance of what loſs, what Inconvenience ſo ever, being leſs to be regarded, then to fall into Sin, and from Sin into *Hell?*

Q. *Is the frequent haunts of Taverns, Tipling Houſes, and other the like publick places, to be looked on as an occaſion of Sin?*

A. Such

A. Such a courſe of life cannot but be liable to many diſorders; ſuch as are, Drunkenneſs, Blaſphemies, Execrations, Oaths, Laſcivious diſcourſe, diſſolute Actions, detractions, Quarrels, Batteries, the Diſſipation of Eſtates, Ruin of Families, with little or no care of Wife, Children, or other domeſtick concerns: From whence ariſe thoſe diſcentions, thoſe heats, thoſe opprobrious replies, with other violent tranſports, which are but daily ſeen, to the diſturbance of the Peace of Families, and not without confuſion, and ſcandal to the Church of God.

The Admittance then of ſuch a ſort of People to Abſolution, is not at all practicable, till they ſhall have embraced a more laudable courſe of life, and abſolutely quitted the haunt of thoſe Nurſeries of Vice.

Q. *How*

Q. *How are the Masters of such places to be dealt with, who make it their endeavour to draw such guests unto them, and not only permit those debauches mentioned, but for their interest promote them?*

A. They are without all excuse, rendring themselves guilty of all the scandals, all the disorders they permit, and which are by so reprobate a sort of People there committed; who make such Places their Rendezvous, claiming the Liberty to do and say at will: And therefore cannot those publick Houses be better to any thing compared than Hell, where good is not known, and evil only Reigns: And as the Master of the place becomes, by tollerating for his own advantage, such abuses, the most guilty; so ought his share in damnation to be greatest. By which it appears, that making their Habitations the nest of such Impieties,

ties, they ought not to be receiv-ed to Abſolution till they ſhall have quitted ſo Irreligious an em-ploy ; or reform'd at leaſt in ſuch ſort their Vocation, that their Houſes become no more ſo pro-phane a Retreat, but ſerve only to furniſh Paſſengers and Strangers with convenient Aliment, and o-ther neceſſary accommodation, ſuch as need ſhall require.

XV. In-

XV. Instruction.

Of Penitents who refuse, or neglect to perform the Penances which are enjoyn'd; And make but little, or no account of Venial Sins.

Q. *WHy do the Holy Fathers call the Sacrament of Penance a Baptisme of Labour and Pain?*

A. Because we cannot without many sighs and tears, nor without great Affliction, as well of body as of mind, recover that Purity of Soul, which we receiv'd by Baptism, and lost again by sin.

Q. *Why so?*

A. Because to render our selves slaves unto the Divel by sin, after having been Adopted Chidren of God

God by Baptiſmal Grace, cannot be but an injury done to the ſpirit of Grace, and an outrage to the Blood of Jeſus Chriſt; a wrong not ſo eaſily repaired, as the failings of thoſe, who have no knowledge of a God, nor were ever viſited by the Rayes of his Mercies. It is then but Juſt, that they, who have abus'd the firſt Grace, by means whereof they obtain'd the Remiſſion both of Fault and Pain, ſhould not be again without great labour and pain, re-admitted thereunto: To the end, that being thereby inform'd of the enormity of ſin committed, after Baptiſmal Grace receiv'd; and knowing with what difficulty Grace once loſt, is again recovered, we become the more apprehenſive of the loſs thereof, and endeavour with greater care when obtain'd, to preſerve it.

What is it then, having already abus'd his Mercies, but to expose the Justice of God to mockery, not to have a will to recover his Grace by preventing his Justice; that is to say, by revenging on our selves the Rebellion of our own delinquencies. In a word, it is to be too delicate, and to set on Grace too low a value, not to have a Will, by the rigours of Pennance, to regain it; Nor is there any appearance of true Contrition, where a Will to afflict our selves is wanting, and the meer shadow of the pains, our sins deserve affright us.

These so tender souls then, dreading the thought of Pennance, and wholly indispos'd for the receiving of Sacramental Grace, are not at all to be admitted to Sacramental Absolution, whilest they thus refuse to comply with such Penances as are salutarily enjoyn'd.

For

For if Confessours ought with compassion to resent the frailty of their Penitents, they ought not to flatter their ease, nor indulge their sloath, which would be to encourage sin; nothing more powerfully restraining relapses thereinto, than the imposing of Penances proportioned to the quality of the Crimes.

Q. *Is it for that end; that Penances are impos'd?*

A. No doubt; And observe what the Council of *Trent* teacheth (a) *Penance withholds us like unto a curb, from Sin: It also renders us both more wise, and more watchful for the future. It is also a Soveraign Remedy, by the Vertue whereof the remainder of sin is taken away, and ill Habits caus'd by an ill life, are cured; and this by the application of our selves to those Vertues, which are opposite to the Vices we are*

(a) Pf. 24. c. 18.

moſt inclin'd unto. Moreover, if by way of ſatisfaction for our ſins, we ſubmit our ſelves to ſome little ſufferance, we become thereby Conformable to Jeſus Chriſt, who abundantly ſatisfied for us, and is the true ſource, from whence flow the Merits of all the Satisfactions we can make.

Q. *What think you of thoſe Penitents, who pretend by the ſaying of five* Paters, *and five* Aves, *to make ſatisfaction for mortal ſin?*

A. What can be more ridiculous, then to call Penance, a Baptiſme of Labour and Pain, if the recital only of five *Pater's*, and five *Ave's* were ſufficient, to make us comprehend the enormity of mortal ſin, and beget in us a due apprehenſion of falling back into it. It would prove an eaſy Remedy, if ſo ſhort, and eaſy a Prayer could cure our ill Habits, and put a ſtop to the current of our diſorders. We ſhould in fine, participate at

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an easy rate in the sufferance of Jesus Christ, if five *Paters* and five *Aves*, could beget in us a Conformity to so Divine a Saviour, Languishing for us unto death upon a Cross.

Who see's not then, that it is to contemn, yea to expose the Sacrament of Penance unto mockery, so to reduce unto five *Paters*, and *Aves*, all those Sighes, all those Tears, all those Fasts, together with all those other Penal Works, which were many times of many years durance, and that for one mortal sin alone.

Q. *Do Confessors sin, when they enjoyne light Penances for Mortal sins?*

A. Yes doubtless; and ought to tremble, if they attentively Weigh'd what the Council of *Trent* declares on that Subject, saying, (a) That Priests are oblig'd to en-

(a) Ibid.

joyn Salutary Penances, and proportioned to the quality of ſins, and condition of the Penitents, according as Prudence ſhall dictat, and the Spirit of God direct them; leſt indulging them too much, and flattering, or diſſembling their faults, they become guilty of the ſins of others, by not having enjoyn'd but light and eaſy Penances, for great and Enormous Crimes. Let them above all be careful, adds the ſaid *Council*, that the Penances they enjoyn, ſeem not only to redreſs the Penitents frailty, and hinder his relaps into ſin; but alſo as a ſalutary puniſhment for his paſt ſins: Conformably to the Opinion of the Holy Fathers, who Believ'd and Taught, that the Power given unto Prieſts, is as well to bind, as to looſe.

Q. *Is it not Prudence in a Penitent, to make choice of a Confeſſor, who enjoyns but light and eaſy Penances?*

A. It

A. It is both Blindneſs, and Impiety: It is to reject the Cure proper for his diſeaſe; to ſhew himſelf inſenſible of the enormity of his Crimes; and conſequently, but ill diſpoſed, yea unworthy of the Grace he pretends unto. *The mark* ſaith St. *Gregory*, (*a*) (or the Author of the Commentaries on the Books of Kings,) *of a true Converſion, conſiſts not in the verbal Confeſſion we make, but in the Bitterneſs of our Contrition; For we then eſteem a ſinner truly Converted, when by the ſenſible ſorrow he expreſſeth, and Auſterities thereunto proportion'd, he endeavours to cancel that, whereof he both accuſeth, and ownes himſelf Guilty.*

Q. *What ought one to Judge of a Penitent, who maketh no account of Venial ſins?*

A. One many rationally believe, that he either wholly wants the

(*a*) c. 6. and v. 9. c. 15.

Love

Love of God, or Loves him but little; seeing he so little fears to offend him. From whence it is easy to infer, that his Conversion is defective; and that he but faintly desires, but faintly wills his own Perseverance in Grace; and as faintly resolves to fall no more: For arrive thereunto he cannot, if the Love of God renders not it self Master of his heart, and lesser sins be not with all possible care avoided; those especially, unto which the proneness of his own inclination leads him. It is an excellent saying of St. *Gregory*, That He, *Who neglects to bewail, and avoid venial sins, falls wholly at last from the state of Justice; and though this happen not at once, 'tis yet by little and little done: Like unto a Ship, into which the Water enters but by drops, but yet becomes at length so overcharg'd, that yielding to its own weight, 'tis carried to the bottom.*

A certain Archbiſhop of great Sanctity of life, and of the ſame Judgment with ſo great a Pope, Recommends nothing more, than not to neglect the leaſt of ſins; leaving it for a Maxim worthy to be imbraced, That a Chriſtian ought not to believe that any ſins are little, or that any offence againſt God is ſmall.

THE

THE DAILY EXERCISE OF A Penitent Soul.

1. *FAil not to Riſe in the Morning Early, and believe that God, of his Goodneſs, hath granted you that Day, to the end, to do Penance for your Sins. And reflecting, That it ſhall perhaps be the Laſt of your Life, make a firm Reſolution to employ it well.*

Conſider next, the end for which you have been Created, which is no other, than to know God, to Love, Serve,

Serve, Praiſe, and Bleſs Him, during the courſe of this Life, and for all Eternity.

Forget not that God hath given you a Body and a Soul, and generally all you have, and are Poſſeſſed of, in order to the ſame End, for which He Created you. And that it will be to abuſe thoſe Guifts, and prove but Loſs of Time, to apply them to any other uſe or end.

Reſolve firmly to do nothing, but what you ſhall know to be Acceptable to Almighty God, regard being ſtill had to the State, and Condition his Divine Providence hath placed you in.

2. *You ſhall apply your ſelf, for ſome time, in the Morning, being awaked, as alſo a little before Noon, and at Night, before you betake your ſelf to Reſt, ſeriouſly to examin, and enquire into the preſent State of your own Soul; Entertaining*

not

not at such times, your thoughts but with God alone, by the exercise of those Interiour Sentiments, which are here beneath prescrib'd.

3. *Endeavour to be dayly present at the Sacrifice of the* Mass, *representing to your self, by an Act of Lively Faith, the Bloody Oblation, which* Jesus Christ *made upon the Altar of the Cross; as if you were effectively present on Mount* Calvary, *and as if this were the very Moment, in which He there yielded up the Ghost for your Sins, but approach not too near the Altar, calling to mind your own unworthiness to be present at so dreadful a Sacrifice; and that you ought, according to the Antient Ordinances of the Church, to be expel'd from thence.*

If your Affairs, or other accident shall divert you from being present at Mass, *assist at least thereat in Will and Affection, sending thither your Thoughts and Heart; especially when*

the Bell shall give Notice of the time, when the said Sacrifice is to be Offered up.

4. *Forget not, that whereſoever you are, you are in the Preſence of that Soveraign and Supream Judge, whoſe Sentence ſhall one day render you Happy or Accurs'd for all Eternity. Set then a Watch over all your Thoughts, Words, and Deeds; avoid with all care the Occaſions of being drawn into Sin; and decline, as much as may be, the danger of vain Converſations, needleſs Divertiſements, and the like.*

5. *Have always in your Memory certain Prayers, called Jaculatory, to the end, to raiſe frequently up, by the uſe thereof, your Heart and Soul to God; nor omit to carry ſome Mark or Token about you, which may ſerve to renew the Remembrance thereof.*

In

6. *In all the Afflictions which ſhall befall you, or which others, though unjuſtly ſhall cauſe you to ſuffer, remember that it is the hand of God which Inflicts them, as a Penance for your Sins; Embrace them then with Patience, and receive them with all humble ſubmiſſion, as from his Hand, and Offer them up again for that end unto Him.*

Neglect not alſo daily to Mortify your ſelf in ſome one kind or other. Diſpence, for Example, on Sundays, with Divertiſements, and be preſent, with due Devotion, at the Divine Office of the Church. Faſt on Frydays and Saturdays; Abate at other times an Hour of your wonted Repoſe; or deny that in particular unto your Appetite, which you find moſt agreeable unto it; and fail not to Relieve with your Charitable Almes, the Neceſſities of the Poor.

If you ſhall feel any good Motions, or if any good Thoughts ſhall occur:

If you ſhall experience any Amendment of Life; or ſhall have done any good Work, aſſume not the Glory thereof unto your ſelf, but with all Humility acknowledg, that it is God alone, who hath wrought that Good in you, through the Grace, which Jeſus Chriſt *hath merited for you. You ought therefore to render Him the thanks, as alſo with an entire Confidence to deſire Him to perfect in you, what it hath pleaſed his Goodneſs to begin: and if He ſhall at any time abandon you to a drineſs of ſoul, withdrawing from your Heart the ſweets of Heavenly Conſolation; loſe not Courage, but acknowledging your ſelf unworthy of ſo extraordinary a favour, continue your Exerciſes with Patiente, reſigning up your ſelf entirely to his Conduct, be it in the way of Roſes, or of Thorns, as it ſhall beſt ſtand with his divine Pleaſure.*

THE

The Interiour

Sentiments or Affections,

OF A

Penitent Soul,

For the Seven Days of the Week.

For the First Day.

HAppy are the Juſt, for they are the Servants, the Friends, and the Children of God.

To ſerve Thee, my God, is to Raign indeed; What an Happineſs then to be of the number of thy Friends and Children?

If God be with us; who ſhall be againſt us?

Miſerable Wretch that I am, I have loſt by Sin, the moſt Sovereign of Goods; and am become a Slave to the Devil, and Child of Perdition.

Who can deliver me from the Miſery into which I am fallen? who ſhall be able to Convert this Heart of mine, which hath put on the hardneſs of a Rock? Who ſhall give me a New Spirit, that I may walk in the way of thy Commandements?

I confeſs, my God, that being left by Thee unto my ſelf, I am wholly unable to Convert my ſelf, by my own force unto Thee.

I Believe according to thy Holy Word, that I cannot become maſter of one good Thought, if it be not through thy Mercy, by Thee inſpir'd.

I am unworthy O Lord, that thou

thou ſhould'ſt have any Remembrance of me: And if thou caſt me for ever off, thou ſhalt do but Juſtice, and I ſhall have no cauſe to complain.

Be thou for ever Bleſſed, my God, who haſt not denied me thy Grace, and haſt given me a Will to become Converted unto Thee.

'Tis Thou, my God, who haſt inſpir'd me with this deſire, for in vain, without Thee, ſhould I have pretended unto it.

Oh my God, I humbly beſeech Thee, through thy infinite Mercies, to perfect that in me, which thou haſt, with ſo great Love begun; I can do nothing without thee, and with thee I can do All.

Is it not true, that at the Font of Baptiſm I renounc'd the Devil, and all his Pomps; and is not this Promiſe of mine, Seal'd with the Blood of JESUS Chriſt, by whoſe Merits thou didſt Purify me.

Why have I then ſo ſoon caſt off this Robe of Purity, and trampled under foot his Blood. Oh how Terrible a thing is it to fall into the Hands of the Living God. 'Tis thy Mercy, my God, not thy Juſtice, I humbly recurr unto.

For the Second Day,

OH Great God, and Eternal Verity, it is impoſſible, without Faith, to pleaſe thee; and it is again as impoſſible to procure this Faith, if by thy Grace thou granteſt it not. Give me it then, Lord, and I will be ever Faithful unto Thee.

Thou knoweſt all, Lord, and can'ſt not fail. Thou art the Soveraign Goodneſs, and can'ſt not deceive us. I Believe then, Lord, that all which Thou haſt Promiſed and Reveal'd, is infallible. I par-

particularly believe, That it is by thee, that the Wicked are juſtified; and that it is thy Almighty Hand which beginneth, and bringeth ſo great a Work to perfection.

It is thou, my God, that workeſt in us the Will and the Deed, as Thou pleaſeſt.

I alſo Believe, That thou Juſtifieſt the Wicked gratuitly, not in conſideration of any Merits of his, but purely through thy great Mercyes.

Should'ſt thou caſt me off, as thou haſt done ſo many *Jews*, ſo many *Gentiles*, ſo many *Chriſtians* of evil Life; yea, the *Devil* himſelf; thou wouldſt do but what becomes thy Juſtice, and I ſhould have no cauſe of complaint.

I farther yet Believe, That all the Graces, which are generally given, be it to Believe in God, to Hope in him, or to Love him;

as alſo the Grace of the Remiſſion of our Sins, with that of our Juſtification, are not given unto us, but in conſideration of the Merits of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and principally of his Death and Paſſion.

It is what I Believe, my God, with all my Heart; and yet my incredulity ſtands in continual need of thy Aid. Vouchſafe then, my God, to ſtrengthen, and to augment my Faith.

For the Third Day.

IT is againſt Thee alone, my God, 'tis before thee, and in thy divine Preſence that I have ſinned; how great an Enormity is it to have ſo often contemn'd ſo infinite a Majeſty.

As Great as thou art in Glory and Magnificence, ſo great are my Sins in malice. Oh how Enormous

mous are the Crimes I have committed againſt thy holy Commandements by Works, Words, and Thoughts; How great is the number of them!

How often have I had a Will to Sin, could I have but avoided the Chaſtiſement due thereunto.

When I attentively conſider thy Commandements, I find my ſelf in all things Guilty.

I have ſinned againſt Faith, Hope, and Charity; as alſo againſt all other Vertues.

The ſins of others lye heavy without number on me, which I either advis'd, or in ſome ſort approved of; at leaſt I hindred them not, as I ought, or elſe adminiſtred the occaſion.

Chriſt Jeſus hath ſuffered death for us; teaching us thereby, that the end of our Creation is not the enjoyment of temporal fortunes; but that we ought to live to him alone,

alone, who dyed for us; Oh how ill have I complied with that fidelity I owe unto him.

The Fourth Day.

OH, how great is the number of those, who now burn in Hell for the same sins, which I, miserable wretch, so often have committed. How great, I say, is the number of those, who have now been plung'd, and that for so many thousands of years past, amid'st those dreadful flames, and yet never perhaps so haynously offended God as I have done.

Oh Fire, never to be quench'd: Oh Worm, which gnawest the Conscience, and shalt never dye. Oh Eternity, Eternity; Oh accursed and insupportable Eternity; Oh Sentence full of terrour; (a) *Be-*

(a) Mat. 25.

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gon from me, ye Accurs'd, Begone into eternal Flames. Oh ſeverity of Juſtice, which ſhall for all Eternity cry out, *Multiply his Torments, add unto his Sorrows* (b) *with proportion to the Pride, he exalted himſelf withal, and to the Delights he abandon'd himſelf unto.* And will it not perhaps be to day, perhaps this very moment, that God ſhall pronounce againſt me this ſo formidable a Sentence.

I confeſs, my God, That I have merited theſe Pains, but firmly Hope withal, that thou wilt, through the abundance of thy Mercyes receive me into Favour.

I hope my Lord, that thou wilt not only not condemn me, but admit me to the fruition of that happyneſs, which eye hath not ſeen, ear heard, nor heart of man is able to comprehend; ſeeing thou haſt not ſpared the Blood, nor Life of thy own, and only Son to ſave

(b) Apoc. 18.

us.

us. Have pitty on me, 'tis thy mercy, my God, I demand, through the merits of his bitter Paſſion and Death.

Lord, who didſt call a King *Manaſſes*, a *Magdalen*, a *Thief*; and many other Sinners to Repentance, Receive me into the Arms of thy Mercies. Happy are thoſe who abide in thy Houſe; they ſhall Bleſs, and Praiſe Thee for all Eternity.

For the Fifth Day.

OH Abiſs of Mercy, and undrainable Source of Grace! I deſpiſed Thee, and thou didſt Love me, even to that exceſs, as not to ſpare for my ſake, the Life of thy only Son

All this thou doſt, my Lord, and yet who am I? and who art Thou? Thou art All, and I am nothing.

nothing. I am a miſerable Creature, and a ſlave to the Devil; and Thou art an Eternal God, and Lord of Heaven and Earth.

Oh eternal Bounty and Wiſdom: Oh infinite and incomprehenſible Perfection; why have I ever offended thee?

What do thy Commandements contain, but what is moſt Juſt? why have not I then kept them.

Thou didſt command me, Lord, to Love thee above all things, and it is but reaſon, ſeeing thy infinite Goodneſs ſurpaſſeth all, which can merit Love. It is alſo but juſt that I Love my own Soul, which is immortal, more than my Body, which tendeth to Corruption; that I Love, for the Love of thee, my Neighbour as my ſelf, doing unto others, what I deſire they ſhould do unto me; That we be more ſolicitous for that which is eternal, than that, which can-

cannot be but for a time. It is, in fine, but juſt, that we live according to the Rules of Sobriety, Chaſtity, and the like: Theſe things are all by thee, O Lord, commanded, and I therein acknowledg thy Eternal Wiſdom and Juſtice.

Thy Juſtice, Lord, is Juſtice from all Eternity, and thy Law is Verity. Thy Works are perfect, and thy Guifts ineſtimable. But who ſhall ever be able to comprehend the Perfections, and Goodneſs of Him, who is the true Source, from whence all theſe Guifts flow?

Oh Beauty, infinitely Amiable! Oh Verity! Oh eternal Juſtice! How Late do I begin to know Thee; how Late to love Thee!

The Sixth Day.

WHat could I hope to find out of thee, my Lord, but Filth, Malice, and Iniquity? I for ever deteſt whatſoever I have committed againſt thee.

Grant me, Lord, the Grace of tears, to bewail my Impieties, for it is againſt thee I have ſinned.

I have abandon'd, and deſpis'd thee, O Eternal Father; Thee I ſay, who haſt created me, and conſerved me with ſuch Fatherly care.

O Lord Jeſus, who by thy Death haſt ſaved me; who by thy Sacraments haſt purified me; who in the Holy Euchariſt haſt nouriſhed me with thy Body and Blood; how often have I undervalued, and troad under foot this Precious Blood of thine?

O Holy Ghoſt, by how many Sacriledges have I prophan'd thy holy Temple, defiling my ſelf by ſo many ſins; my ſelf, I ſay, whom the Font of Baptiſm had rendred the Conſecrated, and Living Temple of God?

No wonder, Lord, if thou puniſh ſin with eternal pains, the malice thereof being infinit, and incomprehenſible.

It repents me Lord; yes, it heartily repents me, to have ſinned againſt thee, Great God, to whom all Love, all Obedience, all Submiſſion are for ever due.

I deteſt, not for a time only, but for ever, all mortal ſin; but above all, becauſe it diſpleaſeth thee, my God, I am here firmly reſolv'd, to fly, not only Mortal ſin, but even all occaſions enviting thereunto. And proteſt that my chief care ſhall be, to obſerve thy Commandements, and to perſevere in thy Grace.

Con-

Conserve, Lord, and fortifie by thy Grace this resolution of mine: And grant my God, that I rather choose to die, than ever to fall into mortal sin again; it is this Grace I humbly demand of thee, through Jesus Christ thy only Son.

The Seventh Day.

I Acknowledg, my God, my own Insufficiency to make that Satisfaction, which is unto thy Justice for my sins due. I offer them up unto thee, in lieu thereof, the Merits of my Saviour Jesus Christ, and particularly his Death and Passion.

The Church heretofore ordered seven years Penance in punishment for one only act of simple Fornication; What Penance then do not the disorders of my life past deserve?

By

By the committing of how many ſins have I offended my God, and that to ſatisfie the appetites of my fleſh, and the deſires of my ſences.

Juſt God, it ſtands but with all reaſon, that I undergo all ſuffrance, in puniſhment, and ſatisfaction for ſo many, and ſo great crimes of mine; and that, what ſiniſter accidents ſoever befall me, I ſubmit to thy Divine Will, notwithſtanding the repugnance of mine own natural Inclinations thereunto. I am then willing from henceforth to believe, that it will but ſtand with Juſtice, that all worldly diſgraces, together with all the miſeries of this Life, overwhelm me, and ſhall, my God embrace them, and with all readineſs ſuffer them, as a due Penance, which thy juſt Hand ſhall have laid upon me for my ſins.

The Holy Scriptures teach me, that

that thy Wiſdom powerfully extendeth it ſelf to all the extremities of the Earth; and that thy Divine Providence diſpoſeth of all the diſgraces, all the evils, which can befall us, though through the malice and injuſtice of men. It is then my part to ſubmit thereunto, and to adore the ſame.

Let me then receive any wrong, let me meet with Injuries, let me fall into contempt, let me be expoſed to mockery and ſcorn: I will ſuffer it, my God, and receive it as from thy holy hand; being well aſſur'd, that nothing can befall me, but by the order of thy Providence, and in leſs meaſure, than my ſins deſerve. Thou art Juſt, O Lord, and thy Judgments are equitable in the chaſtiſement of my crimes.

If I ſhall be viſited with ſickneſs, or adverſity, I ſhall ſtill own it, much leſs, without all complaint,

then

then what will be due unto thy Justice.

I look on my self as a guilty Person, justly condemn'd to death, but whose Execution is for some time delayed. If the exercises of a Christian Life be practised with difficulty and pain, I have well deserved to suffer more; so far be it then from me to neglect, or omit any part thereof, that I purpose with exactness to perform them all.

Long Prayers, the truth is, are uneasie, Fasting incommodes me, Alms-Deeds suite not with my Avarice, nor doth my humour lead me to reprehend, or correct others. Nevertheless as there is no labour, or difficulty, which I ought not to surmount in order to Penance for my sins, so is there not any one of these things mentioned, which I will decline.

What I demand of thee, my God through the Merits of thy dear Son

is,

is, that whatsoever I shall do or suffer, I may do, and suffer it in the Spirit of true and Christian Penance; and that in fine, I may place my whole confidence, not in what I shall do, or suffer for thee, but in what Jesus Christ, thy Beloved Son hath done and suffered for me. Permit me only to joyn my satisfactions unto those, which he offered up unto thee for the sins of all the World; and I shall remain assured through thy Mercies, of the Remission and Pardon of all my sins.

MEDI-

MEDITATIONS

Proper for a

Penitent Soul.

I. Meditation.

Of the Fear of the Judgments of God.

MY whole life affrights me, for making a ſtrict enquiry thereinto: I find it to have been almoſt wholly waſted in ſin, without having done any good at all:

This is the ſecond of St. *Anſelms* Meditations.

Of

Or if any thing hath perhaps carried any appearance with it of good, it hath been with ſo many Imperfections accompanied, that it could not be but diſpleaſing to the Eye of God, at leaſt not pleaſing unto him.

Behold then, O ſinner, not almoſt all, but aſſuredly thy whole life ſpent, either in ſin, which proclaimes thee a Criminal; or in Idleneſs, which ought to cover thee with ſhame. But why put I a difference between an idle & a Criminal life? A life of Idleneſs, or of which comes no good, cannot be but Criminal: A Verity not to be doubted of; Verity it ſelf having ſaid, That *every Tree bearing not good Fruit ſhall be cut down, and caſt into the Fire.* In fine, if I do any good, which may chance to tend to the benefit of others, it is not ſtill worth the nouriſhment I receive; and of which I make ſo ill uſe: and who would

feed a Beaſt, whoſe ſervice Countervails not the meat he eats? And yet, my God, thou diſdaineſt not to nourish with ſo much Bounty, and Patience, not only an uſeleſs worm, but even a ſinner, and worſt indeed of ſinners. The ſtench of a dead Dog, rotten, and turn'd to corruption, is certainly leſs inſupportable, leſs offenſive, then is unto Almighty God, the ill ſavour of a foul dead, and putrified in ſin.

Wretch that I am, being rather indeed the diſhonour of Mankind, than a Man, of leſs value then a beaſt, and leſs ſufferable then the noyſumneſs of a ſtinking carcaſs.

Ah! My life is become burdenſom unto me; but as I am aſhamed to live, ſo do I fear to dye. What then remains, but that during my whole life, I bewail my whole life, and that my whole life ceaſe not to bewail it ſelf.

But what ſurprizeth me moſt in this unhappy condition of mine, and moſt deſerves to be in this ſurprize lamented, is, that the ſorrow my Soul feels, is in no wiſe anſwerable to the knowledge ſhe hath of her own miſery; and that ſhe liveth, and languiſheth, with as much ſecurity, as if ſhe were wholly a Stranger to her ſelf. Unprofitable ſoul, what do'ſt thou? from whence flowes this ſo ſupine an inſenſibility, knoweſt thou not that the day of Judgement is at hand? that the great Day of our Lord approaches? And that thou ſhalt ſee, ſooner then thou imagineſt, this day of Wrath; this day of trouble and anguiſh; this day of affliction and miſery; this day of darkneſs and obſcurity; this day of Tempeſts and Storms. In fine, this day of the Trumpet, which ſhall awake and cauſe the dead to riſe. O how terrible is

but the mention of this day of our Lord? What! Tepid ſoul, which meriteſt to be by God Repudiated; What! ſleepeſt thou ſtill on? He, whom ſo loud a Thunder awakens not, and cauſeth not to tremble, Alas! he ſleeps not, but is dead indeed.

Dry & withered Tree! Where's the Fruit thou oughteſt to have born? Tree which merit'ſt not but the Ax and Fire, nor canſt expect leſs, then to be cut down, and ruduced to fuel: Where's, I ſay, the Fruit thou ſhould'ſt have brought forth? Thou haſt yeilded but ſharp thorns, and bitter Fruit; but God grant that the points of theſe thorns, though blunted thereby, may force an entrance ſenſible, and deep enough to wound thee unto true Contrition; and that the bitterneſs of thy ſins prove ſo medicinal, as to work the Remiſſion of them.

Thou

Thou thinkeſt perhaps, that, of ſins, ſome are but ſmall, and of little account; but God, who is to be the Judg, will find none ſo ſmall, or inconſiderable, as many think? What! do not all ſins, by reaſon of the Diſobedience they carry with them, tend to the Diſhonour of God? And ſhall a ſinner then preſume to ſay, that his ſins are but of ſmall, or no account? As if, to diſhonour God, could at any time be but of ſmall account: Oh peice of Wood, dry, and fruitleſs, and meritting no leſs then Eternal Flames; What anſwer wilt thou make at that Great day, when an account, even of the leaſt glance of an eye; an account of each moment of thy life ſhall be demanded; each minutes paſſage thereof, ſhall be narrowly ſifted into? Then ſhall a Sentence of Condemnation paſs againſt what ſhall appear, as well in thy Actions, as in thy forbearance to act; as

well in thy words, as in the ſilence thou haſt obſerved: Not the leaſt of all thy thoughts ſhall pretend a priviledge of exemption: Nor ſhall it eſcape, to have liv'd, and not to have liv'd to God alone; whoſe ſole Will ought to have been made the Rule, and End of thy life.

Ah Wretch! how many ſins, which now eſcape thy knowledge, ſhall then, like Enemies ruſhing forth of an Ambuſh, in whole Troops aſſail thee, more doubtleſs in number, and more perhaps enormous, then thoſe which now occur. How many things, which now carry with them an appearance of Good, ſhall then in their true colours appear, and appear great ſins? 'Tis at this moment thou ſhalt reap according as thou haſt ſown, during this life? 'Tis I ſay at this moment that all gates to Mercy ſhall be ſhut; at this moment, when ſorrow for ſin ſhall be fruitleſs; at this

moment

moment, that promiſe of Amend-ment, ſhall be too late.

'Tis now then the time, that thou oughteſt ſeriouſly to reflect on what thou haſt done, and what thou art to receive. If the Good thou haſt done, be much; and but little the bad, thou haſt then cauſe to rejoyce; but if the bad ſurpaſs conſiderably the Good, Oh 'tis then thou haſt cauſe, and juſt cauſe to lament.

Ah! Worſt of ſinners! Is not the very thought thereof capable to draw from thee even the deep-eſt ſighs, and to change into floods of tears the blood of all thy veins?

Oh Hardneſs, even to aſtoniſh-ment, which ſtroaks, ſo violent, are yet too weak to work upon, Oh, to what degree is all ſenſe of feeling loſt, where points ſo ſharp, ſo piercing, loſe their force? Oh how profound a ſleep; ſleep

I ſay of Death, where ſo formidable an Alarum rouſeth not up at all.

But there is enough ſaid on this Subject Improfitable Soul; enough ſaid to induce thee, and that without intermiſſion, to Lament; enough ſaid to nouriſh thee with thy own Tears, without ever putting a ſtop unto them.

But why lay I not open the whole Series of thoſe miſeries, which ſo nearly threaten me? why diſſemble I them? why conceal I them from the view of my own ſoul? Would I that the moſt dreadful of all Tempeſts ſhould diſcharge it ſelf on my own head, and that at once? or that ſorrowes not foreſeen, ſhould, at unawares, oe'rwhelm me? It behoves not a ſinner ſo to do.

But ſhould I unburden my ſelf, of whatſoever my thoughts can ſuggeſt, concerning the Account I

muſt render of my Life, and pains due unto my ſins; it will ſtill, alas, be nothing, in compariſon of what it is indeed.

Let my Eyes then, without ceaſe, melt night and day into tears. Augment ſinner, Augment the Weight of thy miſeries: Add terrour unto terrour, cries unto cries; reflecting, that thou art to have him for thy Judg, whom thou haſt injured by diſobeying God, and violating his Laws: Him I ſay who hath rendred thee Good for Evil; & unto whom thou haſt made no other return, than of Evil for Good: Him, whoſe hand Patience now with-holds; but ſhall then manifeſt himſelf in rigour: Him, whoſe mercies only now take place, but whoſe juſtice only ſhall then act its part.

Unhappy creature! againſt whom have I ſinned? 'Tis a God that I have injur'd; 'tis the Omnipotent I have offended. But juſt Wrath of

of the Almighty, overwhelm me not: Juſt Indignation of the Higheſt, I am not an object Worthy of thee; and am yet leſs able to ſupport the force of thy Arm.

Oh! into what ſtraights am I fallen? on this ſide, I behold my own ſins, which accuſe me; on that the Juſtice of God, which affrights me; beneath I behold the dreadful Abyſs of Hell open; above, my Judge Armed with Wrath; within me, I feel the fire of my own Conſcience, which devours me; And without, I diſcover the World all on a flame with difficulty, and that enough: Shall the juſt be ſav'd, whither ſhall the wicked, ſurpriz'd in his crimes by Death, betake himſelf?

Environ'd with theſe extremities, where ſhall I hide my ſelf? How, oh how ſhall I dare to appear? To hide will be impoſſible, to appear, will be intollerable. I will

will ſeek a place of concealment; but that will not be; I will decline appearance, nor will that be granted. What will then, Ah! What will then, I ſay, become of me? Who will reſcue one out of the Hands of this Great God? Whom ſhall I reſort to for Advice? Who will ſave me? Who is he that is called the Angel of Great Counſel and a Saviour, that I may addreſs my ſelf unto him, and call him by his Name, with all the force my Voice will reach unto: Who is he? Why 'tis a Jeſus: But alaſs, 'tis He, 'tis a Jeſus Himſelf who is my Judge, into whoſe Hands to fall 'tis terrible to think on.

However, ſince, here it is, that thou oughteſt to abate thy Fear, and mitigate thy Diſquiet, deſpair not, but place, even in him thy hopes, whom thou feareſt, caſt thy ſelf into the Armes of him whom thou haſt unhappily deſerted, cry,

and

and that with all importunity after him, whom thou haſt with ſo great Inſolence offended. O *Jeſus!* O my *Jeſus!* for the love of that Name, be thou unto me, what that Name inviteth me to hope for. *Jeſus, Jeſus!* forget the Pride and Inſolence of a ſinner, and caſt the Eyes of thy Mercies on this miſerable creature, who humbly demands Pardon at thy Hands. O *Jeſus!* how ſweet is that Name? how delightful is that Name? What hopes, what Conſolation, doth not that Name afford?

For what Importeth *Jeſus*, but a Saviour. O *Jeſus!* be then unto me (for the love of thy ſelf) a *Jeſus*: Thou haſt made me to be what I am, ſuffer me not to Periſh: Thou, who haſt Redeemed me, Condemn me not: Thou, in fine, who by thy Bounty haſt given me a Being, permit not, that, through my own malice, I caſt my ſelf away.

way. O Benign *Jeſus!* let not my Iniquity deſtroy, what thy Omnipotent Bounty hath made: Own in me what is come from thee, and cleanſe my Heart from whatſoever owes not its being unto thee: Mercy *Jeſus*, Mercy! whilſt time of Mercy is, and Damn me not at the day of thy Juſtice: what advantage wilt thou reap by my Blood? and by thy precipitating me into Eternal death?

They are not thoſe Lord, who deſcend into hell, that ſhall praiſe thy Holy Name; ſhouldeſt thou, my God; receive me into the Arms of thy Mercy, which is Infinite: It would not prejudice their being ſtill as open, their being ſtill as farr, extended as ever: receive me then, O moſt Amiable *Jeſus*, receive me into the happy number of thy Elect, to the end, that together with them, I may Eternally Praiſe and Enjoy thee, placing my whole Glo-

ry in thee, together with those, who love thy Holy Name, and confess thy Glory to be with the Father, and the Holy Ghost for all Eternity.

II. Meditation.

The Lamentation of a Soul which hath sin'd against Purity.

AH! my Soul! my Afflicted Soul! my unhappy Soul! Soul of a Wretch unworthy the name of Man! Quit this languishing condition of thine, and duely reflecting on thy sin, rouse up, and let confusion, and horrour be the entertainment of thy thoughts call to mind the enormity of thy Crime; & let thy grief of heart discharge it self into cries of lamentation. Ponder with Attention the heinousness of thy fact; and

let

let ſorrow and fear joyntly ſeize thee with their whole force at once. Thou, I ſay, whom Celeſtial Waters had purified; Thou who did'ſt both by Promiſe, and Oath dedicate thy ſelf to Jeſus Chriſt, and clad thus with the Robe of Purity, waſt choſen for his Spouſe!

But what is it I now call to mind? The Name of whom did I ſo lately mention? Alas! of no other than the dear Spouſe once of my Integrity, but now the ſevere judge of my impurity. Ah! ſad Remembrance of the Happyneſs I have loſt, why addeſt thou thus new load to the weight of the miſeries, I already groan under? But deplorable ſtate of guilty man, whom good, no leſs then Evil, afflicts; For on the one ſide I find a bad Conſcience as bad a Puniſhment as the flames, in which I fear for ever to burn; and on the other, the very remembrance of a good

Conſcience, and of the rewards due by promiſe thereunto, no leſs torment me; a loſs too great to be without great difficulty repair'd.

Ah! Loſs irreparable! Loſs which lieth ſo heavy on me; having loſt that, without hopes of recovery, which I ought carefully to have for ever ſecured from danger of loſs. Inconſolable loſs, having not only loſt the beſt of Goods, but drawn on my own head the worſt of evils. Oh Purity, which I no more now dare to call my deareſt, but my loſt jewel; which I no more dare to ſtile my delight, but my deſpair, what is become of thee? in how foul, and ſtincking a mire haſt thou left me? Impurity, which haſt perverted my mind, and bereaved me of my ſoul, how cameſt thou thus to take poſſeſſion of my heart? How cameſt thou to caſt it thus down from the Pureſt and beſt of ſtates?

That

That then which cauſeth my grief, and which afflicts me, is, to have thus fallen from the beſt of ſtates; but that which cauſeth my pain, and makes me yet to dread far greater, is to have committed ſo foul a crime: This loſs torments me beyond all conſolation; and this tranſgreſſion of mine renders me liable to chaſtiſements not to be ſupported: ſo deplorable on all hands is my condition, ſuch ſtraits what way ſoever I turn my ſelf, am I fallen into. Oh good, Oh evil, ſo it is, yea ſo it is, that ye with juſtice puniſh that unhappieſt of Creatures, whoſe life ye deſign to render miſerable. Nor is it indeed but what I well deſerve; for thou haſt ſhewn thy ſelf, my ſoul, both diſloyal and perjur'd towards God, and an Adultreſs in reſpect of Jeſus Chriſt: Thou art fallen from the ſublime ſtate of Virginity, and haſt inconſideratly preci-

pitated thy ſelf into the ſordid gulf of all impurity.

Thou, whom Heavens King had called to be his Spouſe, haſt through the heat of paſſion proſtituted thy ſelf unto the Devil: Poor wretch, rejected by God and abandon'd unto him; or rather who haſt divorced thy ſelf from God, and delivered up thy ſelf a prey, by a voluntary engagement, to ſo foul a Fiend. Accurſed, yea more than Accurſed change, to have caſt him off, who had not only beſtowed on thee thy Being, but alſo given thee ſuch aſſurance of his Love, to adhere to him, who never ſought but guilefully to contrive thy ruin. Ah! from whence am I fallen, how have I thus caſt my ſelf down from the higheſt of all ſtates, to the deepeſt of all Abyſſes. Wo unto me, who have thus forſaken him who is eſſentially goodneſs it ſelf, and adjoyn'd my ſelf unto him, in whom malice only reigns. What

What haſt thou done? Blind Folly of mine? blind paſſion, deteſtable impurity, what haſt thou done? Thou haſt left in Heaven above a Chaſt Lover, to follow, even unto Hell, an Enemy, unto whoſe abuſive perſwaſions thou haſt ſo eaſily yeilded thy conſent; and haſt made choyce, not of a chaſt bed, but of a place Famous only for Infamy, and debauch. What Horrours accompany the corruption of the Will? and how loathſom is the ſinck, of a voluntary proſtitution?

Who can, my God, repair this corruption of mine? What ſatisfaction can my God, be made to thy Divine Juſtice for this ſo heinous an offence? Let thy retirement be unhappy man, the deepeſt and ſaddeſt Abyſs of ſorrows; Let the weight of the moſt vehement of all Griefs or'ewhelm thee; thee, I ſay, who haſt wallowed

lowed in the mire and ſtench of Hell it ſelf. Worſt of Criminals, let the darkneſs of inconſolable ſadneſs ſwallow thee up, who tookeſt delight in the filth of all lubricity. And having in fine ſolaced thy ſelf in thy impurities, what reſts but that thou drown thy ſelf in a ſea of Bitterneſs.

Come dreadful apprehenſions, come ſorrows without meaſure, come Grief irremediable, come and aſſemble your ſelves together, come and caſt your ſelves upon me all at once; oppreſs me, deſtroy me; 'tis but juſt, but juſt. I have had the boldneſs, the impudence to deſpiſe ye, and by my impurities to provoke ye all or rather; God indeed, then ye: And now, behold, I invoke you all through a regret capable to move Compaſſion. Torment then ſo guilty a Perſon, and revenge, on me, the cauſe of God; make ſo voluptuous

ous a delinquent to feel the pains even of hell it ſelf, which he hath merited: Give him a taſt of the Puniſhments he hath for himſelf prepared; to the end that he inure himſelf to thoſe torments, he is ſo juſtly hereafter for ever to endure.

Sinner, whoſe Impurities knew no moderation, nor Tranſgreſſions, bounds; Let thy Repentance alſo, let thy ſorrows know none. Plunge and replunge thy ſelf in the Waters of thy own bitterneſs, who did'ſt ſo often plunge thy ſelf in the foul gulf of voluptuous uncleanneſs, conſolation, ſecurity, joy. I no more deſire ye, I pretend no more unto ye, if the Remiſſion of my crime envite ye not back, and procure not your return; I am content to be deprived of ye even unto death, provided my ſin meet then with pardon, and I again with ye after death. Let a rigorous,

and

and continual course of Penance accompany the rest of my dayes, and let the Repentance due unto my fault, become the worst of Executioners, without intermission to torment me; let grief and sorrow afflict me during the whole remainder of my life; God grant it, yea God grant it so to be; 'tis what I heartily wish, 'tis what I earnestly demand, 'tis what I desire. For if I am no longer worthy to lift up my eyes to Heaven in prayer, I have well at least deserved to weep them out. If the reproach of my own Conscience puts me to shame, not permitting me to address my self to Heaven, 'tis but just that the Violence of my own sorrows cast me into confusion; and if fear forbids me to present my self before God, 'tis but reason that I represent unto my self the punishments my sin deserves.

Let then my heart think, and without intermiſſion rethink what it hath done, and what it hath juſtly merited. Let my thoughts deſcend into that place, covered with darkneſs, and with the ſhadow of Death; let them deſcend thither I ſay, and behold what is there laid up in ſtore for this guilty ſoul of mine. Let the conſideration thereof be their entertainment, and let their ſole trouble, and inquietude be to think thereon.

Oh my God! What diſcover I in this place of Darkneſs, in this place of Eternal Miſery? Where no order is, where horrour, and nought but horrour ſhall for ever inhabit? Oh! 'tis nothing but howling, nothing but a confuſion of cryes, nothing but an eternal Repetition of Wo, Wo, that I there hear. Nothing do I there ſee, but tears, but gnaſhing of teeth.

Fire

Fire of Sulphur, fire of darkneſs, fire of Hell: What work mak'ſt thou? how formidable is the Operation of this fire?

Worms, which live amid'ſt theſe flames, with what eagerneſs do you Gnaw, with what ardour do you devouer? and that without danger of being conſum'd by the moſt active, the moſt ardent of all Fires. Devils whoſe infernal rage inceſſantly vents it ſelf amidſt thoſe unquenchable flames; Why treat you with ſuch ſeverity your own Companions in ſufferance? Torments of all kinds, moderate indeed, if the juſtice be conſidered which inflicts you, but yet above all comprehenſion inſupportable in reſpect of thoſe, who are adjudg'd to endure you, will your Rigour never abate? and ſhall the pains, you oblige poor ſuffering ſouls to groan under, be without remedy, or end?

Are

Are thoſe then, Great God, the Puniſhments, thou haſt provided for the voluptuous, and ſuch as deſpiſe thee, of which number I am ſo unhappy as to be: Yes, I am I confeſs, of that infamous number: Ah, my ſoul! How canſt thou then but tremble? Why fail not all my ſpirits? Why forbeareſt thou, my Heart, to ſplit in ſunder? Ah! tortoring crime of mine, whither dragg-eſt thou me? Ah ſin of mine! Whither precipitateſt thou me? Ah my God, to whom delivereſt thou me up? If my offences rendred me Guilty in thy ſight, and againſt thee, am I therefore no longer a Creature of thine? If I have loſt my Purity can I rob thee of thy mercy. If I have given thee cauſe enough, my God, to damn me, haſt thou thereby loſt any part of that, by which thou art wont to ſave? heed not then my God, the evil I have done, ſo as to forget that good,

which is essential unto thee.

Where is, Great God of Verity, where is that assurance, which thou gavest us, saying; *I live, and will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he become converted and Live.* Lord, who canst not lie, what is this, Lord, that thou sayest, *I will not the death of a sinner*, if thou bury in Hell a Sinner, who recurreth to thy Mercies? To throw down, into Hell, is that the same, with, I will that a sinner be converted, and that he live? I am a sinner Lord, yes, I am a sinner; If thou wilt not then the death of a sinner, who can compel thee to do that, which thou hast not a will unto? to wit, to condemn me unto death: And if thy Will be, that a sinner become converted, and live, who can divert thee from doing, what thou hast a will to do? and consequently from converting me, to the end, that I live. Is it the heinousness

nouſneſs of my crime, which obligeth thee to that which thou haſt not a will unto? and debarreth thee from doing that to which thou haſt a will, thee, who art a God Omnipotent: Let it not then, O God Omnipotent, be ſaid, no Lord God, let it be never ſaid, that the malice of a ſinner, who acknowledgeth his fault, and is Repentant, is more prevalent, then the Word of a God, who hath Power to do, whatſoever he hath a will to do.

Remember then great God of Juſtice, God of Sanctity, God of Clemency, Remember that thou art Merciful, my Creator and my Redeemer; But my God, forget with-all thy Juſtice, which ought to puniſh this ſin of mine, and think but on the Bounty thou haſt for a creature of thine: Forget that Indignation, which a poor Criminal had obliged the to put on, and think but on that mercy, which a

poor

poor Penitent humbly recurreth unto.

My crime merits, I confeſs, damnation, and the Penance I do, bears no proportion with the ſatisfaction due unto thy Juſtice: But it is no leſs certain, that the ſins of all mankind, are no leſs diſproportioned to the greatneſs of thy Mercies. Pardon then Merciful God, who deſireſt not the death of a ſinner, and alone canſt ſave, pardon my guilty ſoul: She flies from thy Juſtice, which affrights her, to thy mercies, which fill her with Conſolation; to the end, that having forfeited, by the proſtitution of her ſelf, all pretence to that Crown, which Virginity layes claim unto; ſhe eſcape, at leaſt, by the means of Salutary Penance, the puniſhments due unto thoſe, who have ſuffered ſhipwrack of their Purity. 'Tis what my God, I hope,

know-

knowing it is to be neither above thy Omnipotency, nor unbeſeeming thy Juſtice, nor unuſual to thy Mercy; becauſe thou art all Goodneſs, and thy Mercy is Eternal, who art for ever Bleſſed: So be it.

III Meditation.

Of Sin.

Verity.

TO ſin, is to love that which God hath forbidden us to love, or not to love, and not to have a will to do that, which God commands us to love, and do.

Consideration.

SEeing that the Will of God cannot but be infinitely Holy, a Will oppoſite thereunto, cannot but be infinitely criminal and unjuſt.

Reflection.

HOw often, my God have I lov'd, and done that which thou haſt forbidden me to love and do? Thou haſt forbidden me the love as well of ſottiſh Vanities, as the enticing Pleaſures of the world; yet have I lov'd both, yea even lodg'd my affections on them! How highly culpable am I, then My God, become in thy ſight.

How often have I alſo neglected, or ſlighted the doing of that, which thou haſt commanded to be done: I have neglected to adore thee as my

my God, to Honour thee as my Lord, to Love thee as my Father. With what indifferency have I demean'd my ſelf towards my Neighbour, eſpecially if indigent, and diſtreſſed, how little love have I had for him? But which is yet worſe, what hatred have not I harboured; what detractions, what calumnies, have not I uttered; what quarrels have not I intereſſed my ſelf in; what occaſions of revenge have not I ſought; or have at leaſt deſir'd it.

O my God, I have Lov'd nothing, and done nothing, which thy Will was I ſhould have lov'd, and done: And have lov'd, and done what thou dideſt forbid me to love, and do, how faulty then hath my whole life been?

Sorrow.

AH! my God, what ought not ſo great impieties to dread from

from ſo juſt and Hand? 'Tis this load of my tranſgreſſions which humbles me at thy feet; and leaves me no more voice, then from the bottom of my heart to cry, Pardon my God, Pardon a ſinful ſoul, which hath violated thy Ordinances; but will hereafter entertain no thought but of an entier ſubmiſſion to thy Will. Pardon great God, Pardon a guilty Wretch worthy thy heavieſt chaſtiſements; but yet ſupplyantly recurring to the abundance of thy Mercies.

Reſolution.

I Deteſt the diſorders of my life paſt. I will no more love, or do, what the Juſtice of thy Laws forbids: but will ſeriouſly apply my ſelf to love and do, what thy commandements, for ever Holy, ſhall enjoyn: I will carefully fly, as well the leaſt thought, as all occaſions of evil,

evil, and embrace none but ſuch as ſhall encline me to good, and lead me unto thee.

Prayer.

STrengthen, my God, this Reſolution, which thy Grace hath given birth unto, and let me rather chooſe to die, then ever to become again diſloyal unto thee.

IV. Meditation.

Of the Blindneſs which accompanies Sin.

Verity.

WE Live in Sin, and fear to die.

Conſi-

Consideration.

IT ſtands but with Reaſon, and Juſtice, being in the ſtate of ſin, to fear death; the inevitable conſequence of Death ſurprizing us in ſin, being the eternal ruin of our ſouls. But what is there leſs conſiſtant with Reaſon and Juſtice, then fearing death, to live in ſin. If we fear death, becauſe it muſt raviſh thoſe Objects, in the love of which our ſin conſiſts; It is the height of Impiety to deſire never to die, to the end that we might alwaies live in ſin.

Reflection.

IT is true, my God, that the apprehenſion I have of death cauſeth one even to tremble, the very thought thereof makes me, I confeſs, wax pale, and my blood to con-

congeal: It being that, which ſhall in an inſtant reduce this body of mine, which I now pamper with eaſe and delicacies; to the condition of a carkaſs, inſupportable to the beſt of Friends, that I ſay which ſhall ſpoyl me of whatſoever others find in me worthy of love; or I find out of my ſelf, worthy of eſteem, 'tis at this fatal moment that I ſhall become to the reſt of Creatures but matter of Horrour, and they to me but matter of Grief.

Yes, I once more avow it, and I declare it before thee, my God, that if I did ſo ſenſibly fear death, not fearing at the ſame time to offend thee, the ſole cauſe, alas, thereof was, the Anxiety of mind I then felt to looſe, and be bereaved of that, to which my Vanities, my Pleaſures, and other crimes owed their whole ſupport.

Sorrow.

AH! my God, What Impiety accompanies ſuch a Fear? What diſorder of Afflictions, where the Heart lies under ſuch an engagement unto Creatures. I feared Death, but I fear'd not to ſin. Ah Impiety! how I deteſt thee.

Reſolution.

I Will hereafter fear death, and not, conſidering my own guilt, without good cauſe: But it ſhall be on no other account then the fear I have to die in ſin: And fearing to die in ſin, I muſt reſolve to live no longer in ſin; ſeeing that to live in ſin, will be to die therein.

Prayer.

IT is the Light of thy Grace alone, my God, which diſcloſeth unto me theſe ſo important Verities: Let then the Nailes of ſo juſt an apprehenſion pierce my Heart, that acquitting me of all Attachments as well to Creatures as my ſelf, they may inſeparably faſten me unto thee. Grant my God, that this Salutary fear diſpoſe this heart of mine to love thee, and thee alone.

V. Meditation.

On the ſame Subject.

Verity.

FInding the Will too weak to reſiſt ſin, and ſway'd by too ſtrong an inclination to the love thereof, we eaſily perſwade our ſelves, that the ſin we commit is not ſo great, but rather much leſs then indeed it is.

Conſideration.

IT would be little conſonant to reaſon, to fancy that a fall ſhould be leſs dangerous becauſe of the leſs force we have to ſuſtain our ſelves, and greater violence, we are carryed withall upon it. It would be an Imagination very ridicu-

diculous to think, that the more the Root is cankred, the leſs tainted is the Fruit which the Tree bears, or to believe the waters leſs perilous, where the ſource is moſt envenomed.

It would be pleaſant ſport, if to comfort a ſick perſon, one ſhould tell him, that his Feavor was well abated, and of leſs danger, becauſe the humours of his body were more diſordered. In fine, it would be little to underſtand the Injuſtice concomitant to Injuries, to pretend, that an Injury proceeding from an heart ſwollen big with averſion and hatred, ſhould be the leſs great, and more worthy of pardon. And would it not be an Impiety to affirm, that the ſtronger the Love is, which unites us unto God, the leſs of ſanctity do our Actions carry with them.

What an Extravagance then; what an Impiety is it to believe,

That the greater our Frailty is, and ſtronger the Inclination we have, to Love the Sin; the leſs will the malice of the Sin be? This Weakneſs of the Will owes not its growth but to the force of the Inclination we have for the ſin. Who dares now to think that the greater the love is we have for the ſin, the leſs will the ſin be. And if it be true, that the greater the engagement of the Will unto ſin is, it yields the more readily its conſent: What doubt can there be, but that the more readily it conſents to ſin, the more it ſins.

Reflection.

WHat Illuſions (my ſoul) have thy thoughts lain under? when thou didſt ſin, thy ſelf furniſh'd thee with an excuſe, thou pretended'ſt not to juſtify thy ſelf, but by charging thy own inclinations, thy own frailty with the blame

blame; Addicting thy ſelf to Vanities, to Intereſt, to Pleaſure, to Creatures: Thou ſaid'ſt unto thy ſelf, 'tis my frailty, which draws me thereunto; 'tis my Inclination which overſways me; and didſt not diſcover, that the greater thy frailty, the ſtronger the Inclination was, the love thou hadſt for ſin; which rendred thy ſin the greater.

Sorrow.

OH, the Enormity of my crimes! No more of excuſe, my God, but, my God, Pardon: I am without Excuſe, but thou art not without Mercy. Pardon, my God, that inſolent Pride of mine, which ſo often alleadg'd that, in excuſe for its ſin, which did indeed augment it. Pardon I ask thee, my God, for all thoſe Criminal Attatchments, which engag'd me not in ſin, but by inclining me too much to love it.

Resolution.

I Detest them, my God, and I Condemn them, to the end that thou Condemn not me. That frailty, which, whilest I built Excuses thereon, lifted me up against thee, shall hereafter only serve for my Confusion, by teaching me, that without the Aid of thy Puissant Grace, I cannot but meet with Fall upon Fall and that all I can do, is but to lose my self. No, my God, that Propensity, which drew me into Sin, shall no more engage me therein; nor shall it serve for other use, than matter of Combate against my self. From this very moment, my God, I here declare a War against those Vanities, that Liberty, the very Thought whereof begets in me an horrour: A War, I say, against all those terrene and sordid Interests, as also against what else soever, this

this Heart of mine, by the ill manag'd Love thereof, hath hitherto been beſotted withal. I will no more ſigh, my God, but after thee; nor will I ſettle my Affections on any thing but thee.

Prayer.

FOrtify, my God, my frailty by the force of thy Grace; Grant that a Love truly Holy, triumph over this Criminal Inclination of mine; And my God, my glory in Thee ſhall be thy Triumph over me.

VI. Meditation.

On the same Subject.

Verity.

WE will love the thing which involves Sin, and will yet perswade our selves, that we love not the Sin.

Consideration.

SEeing that to Sin, is nothing else, than to Love that which is a Sin; to have a Will to love that, which is a Sin, is doubtless to have a Will to Sin, and to Love the Sin. To Love that then which is a Sin, and yet to perswade our selves, that we Love not the Sin, is a strange Stupidity, a Blindness to be pitti-

ed;

ed; 'tis to have a Will to force our ſelves into a belief, that Sin is not Sin; to have a Will, that Vice ſhould become Vertue; and that Sin ſhould put on the Nature of Juſtice.

Reflection.

SUch is, my God, the Condition of my Soul; I could not believe that I did love the Sin; and was convinced that my Heart loved nothing but that which involv'd the Sin. How often did I flatter with this Thought my Paſſion? I intend not to Sin, no, it is not God that I have a will to Offend: How often amidſt the too culpable Satisfactions, which I ſought; amidſt the Vanities, too much ſavouring of the World, which I pleas'd my ſelf in; amidſt thoſe Paſſions, which tranſported me of Choler, Intereſt, and Revenge; in the liberty

and

and freedom I, in private, gave my ſelf over unto, where Pleaſure was all I aimed at? How often, I ſay, amidſt theſe irregular deſires of my Heart, did I ſay unto my ſelf, 'tis not the Sin I propoſe unto my ſelf, nor have I any intention of Offence againſt God: As if I loved and willed not the Sin, willing and loving that which infer'd it.

Ah! this Blindneſs cannot proceed, but from that tye, which hath ſo faſt link'd my Heart to Vanities, to Intereſt, to Paſſion, to Pleaſure; and, in a word, to Creatures. It cannot but ſpring from thence, that having not the power to deny any longer unto them my Love, I was willing, to the end, not to Condemn my ſelf, to ſhelter my ſo doing under a pretence of Juſtice.

But how great a Crime is it not, ſo to be enſlaved to Creatures, and to love Sin to that degree, as to wiſh that Sin were become Vertue; or

at

at leaſt, that Evil were no more a Sin, that ſo I might, with leſs ſcruple, love Evil, and Sin with greater liberty. With ſo little reaſon then can this Blindneſs of mine be alleadged in Excuſe of the irregular Affections of my Heart, or diſorders of my Life, that it is it which cauſeth my Sin, and reproacheth me with my Crime.

Sorrow.

YEs, my God, I own it in thy Preſence, and with bitterneſs of Heart. I have loved Creatures, I have loved Vanities, Pleaſures, with what elſe ſoever contains matter of Sin, and Offends Thee; and would needs, but too erroniouſly, perſwade my ſelf, that it was not the Sin which I loved. I avow, my God, that this Blindneſs is a pain due to my Sin, and the cauſe of my Fall. And 'tis this Blindneſs

which

which I heartily deteſt. Pardon, my God, ſo faulty, ſo blind a Creature.

Reſolution.

I Do no longer, my God, believe, nor ever will, that that Love is not Injurious unto Thee, which is placed on Creatures, with the Excluſion of Thee: I acknowledge, and always will, that to love that which involveth ſin, as Vanity, Pleaſure, Paſſion, or the like, is to love the ſin it involves. In this perſwaſion then, my God, perſiſting, the hatred I will bear unto ſin, as an offence againſt thee, ſhall diſengage my affections from all unlawful pleaſures, from all idle Vanity; yea, generally from all Creatures, which I cannot without ſin love, or adhere unto without the loſs of thee.

Prayer.

Prayer.

BUt, my God, what can be of force enough to diſpel theſe Charmes, which hold me ſo faſt linked unto Creatures, but the Power of thy love, which alone can Unite me unto thee. What can enlighten this darkneſs of mine, the cauſe of my going aſtray? but thoſe Beams, which diſcovering thee unto me, can alone conduct me unto thee. Theſe are the Beams, my God, which a poor blind Creature craves to be illuſtrated withall. 'Tis this Divine Love, with which I pray thee to enflame my Heart, to the end that it love thee, and thee alone.

VII. Meditation.

On the same Subject.

Verity.

WE live in sin, and promise our selves pardon for the same.

Consideration.

GOD is Good, 'tis true, But God is also Just, and is therefore just, because he is good. It is his Goodness which moveth him to hate sin, and which armeth his Justice against the transgressions of men. It is an effect then, as well of his goodness, as his Justice, never to pardon him, who continues in sin.

ſin. God cannot give us his grace, and not cancel at the ſame time the ſin he finds in us: Nor can he approach unto us, but by the removal of ſin from us.

If we conſider the nature of ſin, what can it leſs merrit then the Vengeance of God? What can it expect, but due chaſtiſements? And in fine what more oppoſite to Pardon then Injuries, and Inſolences, or the hopes of pardon, where Injuries are continued?

Reflection.

WHither did thy thoughts, my ſoul, wander in the purſuit of Pleaſures, in the love of Vanities, and in the freedom thou gaveſt thy ſelf of commiting all other ſins? Thou did'ſt inſolently flatter thy ſelf with the conceit of pardon, and did'ſt ſay, God is good, and did'ſt ſtill run on in ſin.

Yea thou would'ſt ſomtimes ſay, I will recurr to the Tribunal of Penance; and in the very thought thereof did'ſt abandon thy ſelf to ſin. Ah! thou did'ſt not obſerve the injury thou didſt, both to the goodneſs and grace of God at once thou did'ſt not reflect, that this deceitful hope of thine, rendred them but ſubſervient to thy Iniquities, taking from thence an occaſion with more freedom to ſin.

Sorrow.

AH! my God, how deplorable was this too great confidence of mine, rendering me inſenſible of the crimes I committed? Ah! my God, how blind are theſe hopes, how vain, which ſo deluded me with the thought of Pardon, when Vengeance was all my offences could expect. But my God, how enormous was that preſump-

ſumption, which thus flattered me in my ſin, and by the aſſurance it gave me of thy grace rendred me but a Child of thy Wrath? To take the liberty to offend God, becauſe his Goodneſs is all Mercy, What a crime! Is it Reaſonable, my God, to offend thee, becauſe thou art good? to ſin againſt thee becauſe thy Mercies abound? If God be goodneſs it ſelf, if his Mercies be infinite, was it not this goodneſs I ought to have applyed my ſelf unto, by refraining from ſin? Shall I dare, my God, to hope hereafter for Pardon, having been guilty of ſo great a preſumption? Shall I dare to promiſe unto my ſelf, any part in thy Goodneſs and Mercies, having ſo notoriouſly abuſed both? yes, my God, I dare, ſeeing thou haſt not left thoſe without hopes thereof, who penitently bewail their ſins paſt, and truly convert themſelves unto thee.

Reſolution.

NO more my God, no more as formerly. The hopes of thy Mercy ſhall no longer encourage me with more freedom to ſin, but quicken the amendment of my life. The uſe I now intend to make of the remiſſion, I expect, of my crimes, is not the deeper to engage my ſelf therein, but the more effectually, and with more fidelity to deteſt them. I will no more ſay, my God, that thy Goodneſs is Infinite, to the end to offend thee with leſs fear, but with more conſtancy to love thee, and rather die, then ever to offend thee more.

Prayer.

THoſe Lights, my God, which diſpel the darkneſs I have lived in; and ſenſe thou haſt given me,

me, not without confusion of my disorders past; are no other than the present effect of thy Mercies, which I cannot sufficiently acknowledge. But yet are they but a preamble, in respect of that great and final work of Salvation, which still needs in order to its perfection, the Assistance of thy more Puissant Grace. These feeble Resolutions of mine must fall to nothing, if not supported by the force of thy divine Love. 'Tis all, my God, I can farther hope for at thy Hands, and what I humbly beg, through the Merits of thy only and dearest Son.

VIII. Meditation,

Of Scandal.

Verity.

WOe unto thoſe, who give Scandal.

Conſideration.

IT is thou, my God, who pronounceſt this Malediction againſt thoſe, through whoſe fault Scandal arrives; It is thou, who proclaimeſt in thy Holy Scriptures, by the Mouth of thy only Son, this ſo terrible an Anathema againſt all of either Sex, who become unto others an occaſion of Sin. And how deſerved an Anathema, how juſt a Malediction? For what is there more un-

unworthy a Creature, than to contribute to the Offence of his Creator? What more unworthy a Christian, than to occasion the Damnation of those, whom *Jesus Christ* hath a Will to Save? What more unworthy a Person regenerated by Baptism, than to serve, as a snare unto the Devil, to entrap those, for whom the Son of God vouchsafed to shed his Blood? *Woe then to those who give Scandal.*

Reflection.

BUt is it not against me, that *Jesus Christ* pronounceth this so formidable a Curse? Is it not against me, that the Son of God fulminates so terrible a Malediction? Am not I of the number of those, whose whole Industry bends to a vain Adjustment of themselves, and spare no Artifice to enveigle others? One of those, who by the

caſt of an Eye, by ſtuddied Expreſſions, by an immodeſt Dreſs, and other affected Geſtures, have entangled ſo many? Have not I often ſaid in my heart, Let him, if he will, diſpleaſe God; what concerns it me? provided that I but pleaſe him: Let him Damn, if he will, himſelf; all that I will, is, that he but Love me.

Sorrow.

WHom doth not ſuch an impiety ſtrike with horrour? And yet, my God, it is but what my heart hath had a Will to ſay, as often as I have occaſion'd the Fall of others? How many Souls hath Hell ſwallowed up, on the account of my wanton Looks, my vain Attire, my freedom in Converſation; At leaſt through my Advice and Solicitation, inviting them to Places of Debauch,

to Balls, to Comedies, to private Enterviews, or other Divertiſements, where Liberty gave but provocation unto Sin?

What cauſe have not I, my God, to fear Damnation, who have cauſed the Damnation of ſo many? Where, my God, ſhall I now find Mercy, when nothing from thee, but Malediction, can be expected? Great, above Expreſſion, muſt the Scandals, which I have given, though without deſign of Offending thee be, ſo to oblige thee, who art the Fountain of all Benedictions, to proclaim thy Maledictions againſt me: I ſay to oblige thee, who art my Father, to Damn me. How much better had it been for me, had a Mill-ſtone been faſtned to my Neck, and I therewith thrown into ſome River or Sea, than to have occaſioned the Ruin of ſo many Souls: But my God, to whom ſhall I fly but unto thee. And in this

this laſt of Extremities, who will, but thee, have Pitty on me? Let my Tears, my God, or rather let the precious Blood of thy dear and only Son, divert theſe Maledictions from falling on my head: Let my Sighs my God, or rather let thoſe indeed of the Holy Ghoſt appeaſe thy Wrath, reſtoring to me thy Love, and obtaining for me thy Benediction.

Reſolution.

NO more, my God, of Modes offenſive unto thee; No more of ſcandalous Dreſſes diſpleaſing to *Jeſus Chriſt*; No more of Levity in Converſation, deſtructive of divine Grace; No more of Portratures ſhocking Modeſty; no more of Treats, no more of private Enterviews; no more of Glances, Smiles, or Geſtures, only uſeful to the promoting the damnation of

of Souls. Come Death, my God, come Death, rather than ever to administer matter again of Sin, rather than ever to occasion again the Loss of Souls, for which *Jesus Christ* vouchsaf'd to shed his Blood.

Prayer.

IT is to Thee, my God, my Heart oweth the Resolution it hath here made: Support it with thy Grace, and I will be ever Faithful unto thee.

IX. Me-

IX. Meditation.

Of the Converſion of a Sinner.

Verity.

THe chief Happineſs of a Chriſtian, conſiſts in the Salvation of his Soul, as doth his greateſt Miſery in the eternal Loſs thereof.

Conſideration.

WHat greater Happineſs can a Chriſtian arrive unto, than the Poſſeſſion of God Almighty, and that for all Eternity, in the Plenitude of his Glory? And in this doth Salvation conſiſt. What greater Miſery can befall a Chriſtian, than to be for ever Baniſh'd from the Face of God, into the dread-

dreadful Abyſs of Hell? And this is what Damnation imports. God is the only true Good a Chriſtian can pretend unto; the Poſſeſſion then of him is Perfect Happineſs; the Loſs of him, the height of Miſery.

Reflection.

NO Chriſtian doth, or can doubt of this, ſo Important a Verity; But how few, I ſay again, how few ſeriouſly reflect thereon? And as to my ſelf, how ſeldom have I hitherto laid it to heart, how ſeldom Allotted it in my Thoughts a Place? Other matters than this, though the greateſt and firſt of Verities, have been their Entertainment; applying, as I did, my ſelf with more ſolicitude to the Entrigues of the preſent Times, to the Maxims of the World, to the Artifice of improving

proving ſecular Intereſts, and other the like concerns, then to the Conſideration of this ſo main, ſo prime a Truth; which now, through the operation of thy Grace, begins to make Impreſſion on my Heart.

Sorrow.

HOw diſordered, Oh my God! have my Thoughts, how great hath the diſcompoſure of my Mind been; thus to have been wholly buſied on ſottiſh Vanities, on idle, and uſeleſs Curioſities, without once duely reflecting on this ſo ſacred a Verity, which teacheth me, of what Conſequence future Happineſs is? Grant me, my God, the Grace of Tears, worthily to bewail theſe Diſorders of mine.

Reſo-

Reſolution.

NO other Thoughts will I, my God, hereafter admit, then which ſhall promote the Salvation of my Soul. And the firſt of theſe great Verities, which ſhall hereafter enter into my ſerious Conſideration, ſhall be that, which hath to day Taught me, that I cannot be happy, but in the Enjoyment of Thee; and that the eternal Loſs of my ſelf Inevitably follows the Loſs of Thee.

Prayer.

IT is the Work, my God, of thy Mercy, which, by the Diſcovery of theſe great Truths, hath thus begun the Work of my Salvation. But touch, my God, unto the quick my heart, and imprint firmly in it the Love of that, which thou haſt, with

with all certainty, been graciously pleased to make known unto me.

X. Meditation.

On the same Subject.

Verity.

THE whole Care of a Christian ought to be to promote his own Salvation.

Consideration.

IF the proper motion of all creatures naturally carries them to their end, Man cannot, without an infringment of so generall a Law, place his cares on other Good then that of Beatitude, which is his End. And if a Part with the Saints be that where-

whereunto a Chriſtian is called, he cannot ſecure this his Vocation, but by applying himſelf with a Chriſtian fervour, to the practice of thoſe actions which Chriſtian piety preſcribes. Juſtice and Piety are not to be ſought for out of God; All then which leads not unto him, can be but Vanity, and falſhhood, but ſin and damnation.

Reflection.

HEre it is my ſoul, that thou oughteſt to aſſemble all thy thoughts; and ſeriouſly to enquire, whether thou haſt hitherto been a Chriſtian: Whether dureing the whole courſe of thy life, thou haſt put a diligent hand to the work of thy ſalvation: Whether thy heart, which cannot meet with its true repoſe but in God alone, hath bent all its motions towards him: And whether thou haſt with

an

an holy Emulation embraced the Duties of a Chriſtian Life. But will not a due reflection hereon lay open thy ſhame? Will it not convince thee, that the procurement of thy Salvation, hath been the leaſt of all thy thoughts; and laſt of all thy cares? That the whole Courſe of thy Life hath been but a thirſting after Pleaſures, a meer dotage on Vanities, and continual ſolicitude, which the embroilment of temporal concerns hath drawn thee into?

Sorrow.

WIth what Confuſion ought not I to look back on this looſe Life of mine, which hath ſo little ſavour'd of a Chriſtian; ſo little done, in order to the ſecuring the Concerns of a Life to come? Ah! my God, It cannot but argue me void of Senſe, not to

to dye through ſhame, ſo to have Sacrificed my Heart, my Cares, my Time, and Actions of my Life to Vanity, to Intereſt, to Pleaſure; in a word, to Creatures, to Sin; I, whoſe whole Thoughts, and ſole Endeavours ought not to have Aim'd, but at the advancement of my Souls eternal Good; what will Honours, what will Riches, what Pleaſures avail me, whilſt I loſe my ſelf? What will the whole World advantage me, if, together with it, I Damn my ſelf?

Reſolution.

LEt it be Damn'd alone; As for my part, I here dedicate from this inſtant my whole Care, my whole Solicitude, my All, to the carrying the great Work on of my Salvation. 'Tis what alone concerns me, the reſt being all but Vanity. My Study ſhall hereafter be to pleaſe

Jeſus

Jesus Christ alone, in silence and solitude, as far as my state of Life, and Condition shall permit.

I will only from henceforth seek occasions of declaring a War to Vice, and making Grace to triumph by an austere course of mortification, and general retrenchment of whatsoever shall but serve to nourish sin, and set me at a distance with God. In fine, my whole Work shall be Prayer, Books of Devotion, a compliance with the obligations, my present State shall lay upon me, with such other Pious Exercises, as are suitable to the Life, and worthy the Character, and Vocation of a Christian.

Prayer.

'TIs thou hast given me, my God, to understand, that I owe to my Salvation, my Thoughts, my Care, my Time. But thou know-

est

eſt, how ineffectual without thee my ſtrongeſt Reſolutions, how fruitleſs my beſt Endeavours will prove. Support then, by thy powerful Hand, my Frailty; my future Happineſs is more the Work of thy Grace, than my own Will. Perfect that then in me, which my whole force reacheth not, without thee unto.

XI. Meditation.

On the ſame Subject.

Verity.

UNleſs ye become Converted, ye ſhall all undoubtedly periſh.

Con-

SHall Light ſhine unto him, who pleaſeth himſelf in Darkneſs? Are Rewards and Crowns beſtowed on thoſe, who merit the worſt of Puniſhments? Shall the glory of the Saints be reſerved for him, who Lives in ſin? What Life then can he hope for, who remains in death? that is to ſay, What pretenſion can he have to Heaven, whoſe Converſion is the leaſt, on Earth, of all his Cares? It is no leſs impoſſible for him, who refrains not from Sin, to attain unto Salvation; then it is for Sanctity to be a crime, for Heaven to be Hell, or for the Saints to become tranſform'd into Devils. Would ſin be ſin, could it pretend to a place above? Yea, would God be God, could he crown with Glory the ſins of men?

It is God himſelf hath told us, That if we become not Converted, the Wrack of our Souls is unavoidable. It is himſelf hath aſſur'd us, that Converting not our ſelves, he will Arm with Indignation himſelf againſt us. (a)

Reflection.

IT is then but Truth, yes, my God, as certain a truth as that thou art, that where an hearty and true Converſion is wanting, Hopes of Salvation are in vain; that God is no God for me, my Heart ſtill hanging after Sin. But this ſo great, ſo ſacred a Truth, threatning thus the worſt of Evils, have I ever been ſenſible of? This Truth teaching me, that ſin and damnation are inſeparable, and that my future Happineſs depends on my preſent change of Life; Hath it inclined at all my Will to liſten to

(a) Pſal. 7.

the Thought of my Converſion? My Life hath waſted it ſelf in Pleaſures, in Vanities, and other ſenſual Engagements; And I perceived not my ſelf to be, by ſuch an adheſion unto Creatures, hurried on to Damnation. I paſſed my time in Sin, and ſaw not, that whilſt Sin reigned ſo in me, the Loſs of my ſelf could not but inevitably follow.

Sorrow.

AH! my God, caſt me not away. My Life till now, 'tis true, hath been a Life of Sin. But my God, I now abhor it; and thou haſt yet mercy for me in ſtore: It is true, my God, that having lived without thee, and loved nothing leſs than thee, there is nothing I can pretend unto, nothing which I ought not juſtly to apprehend at thy Hands. And that it is, my God,

God, which Afflicts me, who am resolved to Love hereafter, nothing but thee, and Fear nothing more than to be abandon'd by thee.

Resolution.

FRom this very moment, my God, I will no more think on Vanities, but with a contempt; no more on Pleasures, but with an Aversion; no more on Debauches, Hatred, Revenge, or what other Sin soever, but with a Detestation of them all.

Prayer.

BUt, my God, what Resolutions soever I make, no Conversion follows of the Heart, unless thou put an Hand unto the Work; Convert it then, my God, and I shall be assur'd of its being Converted unto thee.

XII. Meditation.

Of the Mercy of God.

Verity.

GOd hath not mercy but for Sinners.

Consideration.

THe Mercy of God being that which moveth him, through his sole Goodness, to Pardon the sins of Men, were they all Innocent, or could they glory in any merits of their own; God could not have for them but Justice, and Rewards; there can be no place for Pardon, where no Guilt is. It is for Sinners then alone, my God, thy Mercies are reserved.

Re-

Reflection.

What a weakneſs is it then to think, that God hath excluded me from Mercy, becauſe I am a ſinner, I ought rather to have believed, it being no leſs a Verity then of Faith, that were I not a ſinner, he could not make me an object of his Mercy; If my guilt then cauſeth my confuſion, his Mercy is that which ought to fill me with Conſolation.

What blindneſs was it then, that looking not but on the diſorders of my own life, and deformity of my own ſoul, I never caſt an eye on the Grace and Goodneſs of him, who can only therefore ſhew mercy unto me, becauſe he hath been by me offended: How often did I torture my ſelf with the ſole Apprehenſion of his Juſtice, when I ought to have wholly

ly caſt my ſelf into the Armes of his mercy.

Sorrow.

Pardon, my God, I ask Pardon for the Wrong I did thy Grace, whilſt liſtning to thoſe Sentiments of Grief and Fear, I only repreſented to my ſelf the Enormity of my Crimes, and Rigours of thy Juſtice; as if thou wert without Mercy, or hadſt reſerved it for others than Sinners.

Reſolution.

I Will no longer, my God, look on my own Crimes, but as the Object of thy Mercies; Nor will I any more abandon my ſelf to the Apprehenſion of thy Juſtice, unleſs to the end, to ſhelter my ſelf, with more Confidence, in the Boſom of thy Love.

Pra-

Prayer.

IMprint, my God, and that deeply, this Belief in my Heart, and there irremovably Engraft so great a Truth, to wit, that the sight of my Offences ought not to make me fly from, or retard my approach unto thee; it being the heighnousness of my Guilt, which ought to raise my hopes of Pardon, and encourage me to repair with greater Assurance, to the Sanctuary of thy mercies.

XIII. Meditation.

On the same Subject.

Verity.

WHere Sin abounds most, the Mercies of God do most abound.

Consideration.

GOd's Mercy being no other thing than God himself, and in it self, infinite, as are all other his divine Perfections; 'tis subject neither to diminution, or encrease: But considering it with relation unto men, it may well be said, that the Sins of men are the measure of God's mercy towards them; and that our greatest Transgressions need-

needing the greateſt ſhare of Mercy, they are his greateſt Mercies, that greateſt Sinners lay beſt claim unto.

Reflection.

HOw great was then my miſtake, when amidſt the diſquiet I found my ſelf in, I became perſwaded, That the Enormity of my Crimes excluded me from all pretenſion unto Mercy? Ought not I rather to have known, That the Treaſure of his Mercies being open but to Sinners; his greateſt Mercies were what greateſt Sinners had beſt Title unto? And that this divine Treaſury of Mercy, being that which our Hopes ought ſolely to rely upon, the weightier I feel the Burden of my Sins, the greater ought my Confidence in him to have been; whoſe Graces are there moſt plentifully imparted, where Sin doth moſt abound.

Sor-

Sorrow.

ALl ſuch Perſwaſions then, my God, I here abſolutely renounce, and beg thy Pardon for having made them the Subject of my Diſquiet, and Matter for my troubled Thoughts to feed on; having no other Thought of thee, than how, amidſt the Apprehenſions, the remembrance of thy Juſtice had bred in me, to fly, if I could, from thee.

Reſolution.

IF Thoughts, my God, of this nature, any more diſquiet me: If ſuch Frights ſeize any more my Heart, I here diſown them, I here renounce them all. I no leſs reſolve, that the Sorrow due unto my Sins, ſhall hereafter flow from no other motive, than the Love of thee,

thee, and a firm reliance on thy Mercies; and purpoſe to Reject, as the worſt of Tempations, whatſoever may diminiſh, or cauſe me to loſe the Confidence, I ought to Repoſe in thee.

Prayer.

GRant me, O Father of Mercies, grant me, the vileſt of thy Creatures, this Confidence, that it is for me, the greateſt of thy Mercies are reſerved. A Grace not to be expected but from thee, who art a God of Conſolation.

XIV. Meditation.

On the same Subject.

Verity.

THe Mercies of God are greater than all the Sins, which ever have been, or can be committed.

Consideration.

I Readily subscribe unto this Truth, and willingly acknowledge, that the Bounty of my God being an undrainable source of Good, from which nothing of bad can flow; it cannot but exceed the malice of men, which excluding not the possibility of a change unto Good, cannot be an undrainable source of Bad.

Bad. And who can believe that the default of one particular Nature, can be drawn into comparison with the Perfections of a God, who cannot but be Infinite in all which he is.

Reflection.

WHy did not I then fix my Hopes upon this Mercy, which can pardon more than I can offend. If I think that God can shew Mercy unto me, but that the height of my Crimes merit that he cast me off, it is but Truth; but it is to destroy Mercy, and wholly to deprive God of his chiefest Attribute, not to acknowledge, that it being but for the Guilty, it is but for those who merit to be by him cast off.

If I say unto my self, that God can indeed shew Mercy unto me, but that he will not; 'tis too offensive unto Piety, and too much savours of Temerity, so to judge of the designs of God, which cannot

but be hidden from me. The Enormity it ſelf of my Crimes, how great ſoever, can lend to ſuch a judgment no ſupport; his greateſt Mercies pouring moſt themſelves then forth, when greateſt Sinners need them.

If, in fine, my Anxiety tranſport me ſo far, as to deſire to know whether or no God will forget my Offences, and ſhew me Mercy; It is to have a Will to penetrate too far into his Counſels, and to pretend unto a Priviledge, not granted even to Souls the moſt Elect. Are not his own Word, and the Teſtimony of my own Conſcience a ſufficient aſſurance thereof? His Word, when by the mouth of a Prophet he tells me, *That from the moment, that a ſinner ſhall deſiſt from ſin, and do Penance, he will forget his iniquities*: The Teſtimony, in fine, of my own Conſcience aſſures me, that my heart, having, through

through God's Grace, ſin, in no leſs than abomination, and dreading nothing more than the committing it, is reſolved to Love God alone, who cannot abandon thoſe who Love Him.

Sorrow.

AFter ſo many, ſo great aſſurances of the Mercies of my God, who ſought me when I fled from him, and drew me to himſelf, when I was ſo faſt linked unto the World, and moſt engaged in Sin, What an Ingratitude is it, what a Confuſion to be won with ſo much difficulty to repoſe that confidence in him, which is due unto him, and to reſt entirely ſatisfied therein? Ah! my God forgive me.

Reſolution.

I Will no longer lend Attention to what that Sorrow ſhall ſuggeſt, which is accompanied with ſo little of Love; nor liſten to the fallacious way of reaſoning, uſed by

that Fear which is so much a stranger unto Hope: 'Tis to render ones self blind, to have a will to know too much: It sufficeth, my God, to know, that thy Goodness surpasseth my malice, to render me assur'd, that my Crimes shall never exhaust the Infinity of thy Mercies.

Prayer.

BUt my God, who, but thy self, can give me that confidence which relyeth on thee alone. It is what I ask of Thee through the Merits of *Jesus Christ* thy Son, deny it me not.

XV. Meditation.

On the same Subject.

Verity.

THe worst of all the Evils can befall a Soul, is to despair of the Remission of his Sins, and to believe, that

that all the Gates of Mercy are ſhut againſt him.

Conſideration.

IT was the Sin of *Cain*; who did not ſo great an injury to God, by unnaturally embrewing his fratricide hands in his Brothers innocent Blood, as when he ſaid, that his Crime was too great to hope for Pardon. It was this Deſpair of his, which compleated his Reprobation. God, who is all Goodneſs, cannot diſpence his Graces, and not effectually excite us at the ſame time to love them: Nor can this Love but enkindle in us a deſire of them. So that as the firſt of his Mercies is, that which Inſpires us with a deſire of them; ſo is it the laſt, and greateſt of miſeries, to deſpair of obtaining them.

Reflection.

WHat Blindneſs! This laſt and worſt of Evils is what I fear, and I perceive not that the

fear I have of falling thereunto, is the only thing which engageth me deepeſt therein. Ah! how often hath this fear cauſed me to ſay, that the guilt of ſo many Crimes, which lye ſo heavy on me, cannot but exclude me from all hopes of Pardon; but did not, alas, reflect, that this deſpair of Pardon, was that which rendred me moſt unworthy of it. Nor did I conſider, that the too great apprehenſion I had of being debarred from the Mercies of my God, might occaſion the loſs of that only Good, which I moſt deſire.

Sorrow.

IT is, my God, this Love, and the deſire I have of thy Mercy, which makes me bewail in thy ſight the wrong I did unto it, by the thought I harboured, that my Crimes were above all hopes of Pardon; and for this it is I now recurr unto thy Mercy.

Reſo-

Resolution.

NO more then of these Fears, which serve not but to bar up my heart against thy Mercies. A firm confidence on thy Love is what from this very moment I resolve, as I ought, upon. And purpose to renounce, as the greatest of Evils, whatsoever may endanger this so Amorous a confidence, which thy will is I should have in thy Mercies.

Prayer.

SUpport, my God, with the Force of thy Grace, this Resolution which thy Love inspires; and strengthen this so Holy an Alliance of the Sorrow due to my Sins, with that firm Confidence thou commandest me to lodge on the Abundance of thy Goodness.

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